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UNCLE TITUS:

A Story for Children and for those who love Children.

FROM THE GERMAN OF JOHANNA SPYRI,

BY

LUCY WHEELOCK.

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UNCLE TITUS.

CHAPTER I.

UNDER THE LINDENS.

On the beautiful Linden Promenade, at the east side of the city of Carlsruhe, might have been seen, some time ago, a man whose appearance at the same hour every afternoon excited great sympathy among the pleasure-seekers. He seemed very ill, and walked slowly, supporting himself by a staff in his right hand, while his left rested on the shoulder of a child, who was his constant and devoted companion. Occasionally he lifted his hand,

and asked tenderly, "Tell me, my child, do I lean too heavily on you?"

"No, no, indeed, papa!" the child always replied, replacing the hand. "Lean harder; I do not notice it at all."

The invalid was Major Falk, who had recently come to Carlsruhe. He had formerly lived in Hamburg in a quiet way with his daughter Dora and an elderly housekeeper. His wife had died soon after Dora's birth, so the child had never known her mother.

She had hardly felt the loss, so tender had been her father's care, until he was summoned to join the army during the French war.

He was away a long time; and, when he returned, he was suffering from a wound which the physician told him must prove fatal.

Major Falk had a step-sister in Carlsruhe who had married a literary man, Mr. Titus Ehrenreich; and, when he learned the truth in regard to his condition, the wounded man decided to remove to Carlsruhe, in order that his twelve-year-old daughter might not be quite alone when his trouble should become more serious.

This plan was soon carried out, and he was established near his sister in time to enjoy the warm spring days during his daily walks under the shady lindens. His daughter always accompanied him; and, when he tired of walking, they sat together on one of the seats under the trees to rest.

Then he had always something pleasant to tell; and Dora thought nobody could talk so charmingly as her father, and was firmly convinced that there could not be another man in the world so good and

noble. She liked best to hear of her mother, — of how lovely and cheerful she had always been, so that she seemed to carry sunshine wherever she went, and nobody could see her without loving her.

In such conversations her father would entirely forget time and place, until the cool evening air reminded him that it grew late, and that they must return to the city. In front of one of the tall houses in a narrow street he would pause, and say, "We must look in on Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette;" and on the stairs he would add, "Now gently, Dora! You know that Uncle Titus writes very wise books, and cannot be disturbed; and Aunt Ninette cannot bear any noise, — she is not accustomed to it." So Dora would go up on tip-toe, while the Major rang very softly. Aunt Ninette usually

opened the door herself, and said, "Come in, dear brother; but softly, if I may ask it. You know my husband is buried in his work."

You could hardly hear the three as they passed through the corridor into the sitting-room, which was next to Uncle Titus' study; so they were obliged to converse in low tones.

Major Falk was much less apt to forget this than Aunt Ninette herself, especially when she was reminded of any of her troubles, which was often the case.

June came, and one could stay out-of-doors later in the evening; but this pleasure was shortened for our friends by Aunt Ninette's anxiety.

One warm evening, when the sky was gleaming with the sunset light, and overspread with rosy, hazy clouds, Major Falk

sat later than usual, looking at the moving clouds and the golden sky.

Dora had been gazing at her father in silent wonder, when, overpowered by her impression, she exclaimed, —

"O papa! if you could only see yourself! You shine like gold. The angels in heaven must be like that!"

Her father smiled.

"It will soon be over with me, child; but your mother stands behind the rosy clouds always shining like that, and looking down at us."

It was soon over. The man's face grew pale again, and the gold began to fade from the sky.

The Major rose to go, and Dora followed, a little troubled that the beautiful glow had vanished so soon.

"It will shine upon us again, sometime,

Dora," said her father, to comfort her; "and much more beautifully, — when your mother and you and I are all together again, and then it will never fade away."

Aunt Ninette was in the open door awaiting their coming very impatiently; but she did not speak until she had conducted them into the room and closed the door.

"How can you give me such anxiety, dear brother?" she complained. "What frightful things I have imagined! What can have happened to make you so late? And how can you be so careless as to stay out after sundown? You must have taken cold, and what will come of it? Something terrible may result."

"Calm yourself, dear Ninette," said the Major, soothingly, as soon as he could put in a word. "The air is so mild that it

could not possibly harm any one, and the evening was glorious, — quite wonderful! Let me look at the beautiful evenings of earth as long as I may; it will neither hasten nor retard what must soon come."

But these quiet words called forth another lament.

"How can you speak so? How can you give me such anxiety? How can you say such terrible words?" cried the excited woman, again and again. "Such a thing cannot be; it shall not be. What would happen to — You know whom I mean." Here she cast a significant look at Dora. "No, Karl; that is too much. I should not know what to do. It could not be borne!"

"But, dear Ninette," interposed her brother, "do not forget one thing, —

"'Thou art not made a ruler,
The course of things to tell;
God stays and reigns among us,
And guideth all things well.'"

"Oh, yes! I know that, — that is true," declared his sister; "but where there is no help and no escape, one must die of anxiety, and you speak as if such a terrible thing could happen."

"Let us say good-night, and not complain any more," said the Major, extending his hand. "Let us both remember that 'God stays and reigns among us.'"

"Yes, that is certainly true," reiterated his sister. "But don't get cold in the street; and go down-stairs softly; and — do you hear, Dora? — close the door below gently; and, Karl, do look out for the draught in the street."

During these admonitions they de-

scended the stairs and closed the street-door, according to directions, when they had only to cross the street to reach their own dwelling.

The next evening, as Dora sat again with her father under the lindens, she asked, "Papa, did not Aunt Ninette know the verse before, —

"'Thou art not made a ruler,
The course of things to tell;
God dwells and reigns among us,
And guideth all things well'?"

"Yes, yes, Dora; she knew it," was the answer. "Only sometimes, in her anxiety, she forgets who rules all things; but she soon puts herself right again."

Dora thought awhile, then she said, —

"But, papa, how can we help being so anxious that we almost die of dread, as Aunt Ninette said?"

"My dear child," responded her father, "whatever happens to us, we must think that it comes from the good God. If it is a joy, we should have praise in our hearts; if it is a sorrow, it cannot affright and trouble us much, for we know that a good God sends us only what is to prove a blessing in the end. And, although a grief should come to us, so heavy that we can see no help or way of relief, yet God knows a way, and can bring good out of what seems to us entirely evil and sad. Do you understand, Dora, and will you think of it when such an experience comes to you? Every one has sad days, and they will come to you, too, dear child."

"Yes, I understand it now, and I will certainly think of it, papa," said Dora. "I would much rather feel safe than to live in fear."

"But we must not forget," continued

her father, after a pause, "that we must think of God not only when something especial happens, but in every thing; and always ask, 'Is it right?' So we come to the true safety, and are already with God when evil comes, and we have need of Him. But if we never think of Him until trouble comes, then it is hard to find the way to Him."

"Oh! I will not lose the way," said Dora, eagerly. "I will ask God every day, 'Is this right?'"

Tenderly the father stroked the little hand which lay in his. He said no more, but the love and tenderness in his glance seemed to enfold the child with a power that she must feel.

The golden sun sank behind the green trees, and father and child turned their steps towards the tall house in the narrow street.

CHAPTER II.

LONG, LONG DAYS.

SOME days after, Dora sat by her father's bedside with her head buried in the pillow, sobbing as if her heart would break. Her father lay still and pale, a kindly smile resting on his countenance.

She could not understand nor believe what she knew was true, — her father had followed her mother: he was in heaven. He had not come that morning as usual to call her, and when she awoke and went to look for him, she found him apparently asleep, and had quietly seated herself near him, in order not to awaken him.

When the woman came up with break-

fast, and looked in through the open door, she drew back with a cry of alarm, "He is dead! I will bring your aunt," and was gone.

These words fell with crushing weight on Dora's heart. She put her head on the pillow beside her father and lay there sobbing until she heard her aunt enter.

Then she tried to master her grief, knowing that a fearful scene would ensue. So she buried her head in her arms to choke her sobs.

There was a terrible outburst of grief. Her aunt complained pitifully that the greatest possible misfortune had come to her, and that she could not see any light before her. What should she do?

She gathered up some papers which lay in the open drawer of a table near the bed, and was about to lock them up, when

a letter fell out which was addressed to her. She opened it and read, —

"DEAR SISTER NINETTE, — I feel that I must soon leave you. I will not talk with you about it, that you may not feel the sorrow until it comes. One thing I should like to ask you to bear on your heart. Keep my child as long as she needs your assistance. I have not much to leave her; but spend this little in teaching her something useful, that she may be able to support herself. Do not allow yourself to be overcome by grief. Believe, as I do, that God takes care of the children we commend to Him when we can do nothing more ourselves. Accept my thanks for all the kindness you have shown me and my child. May God reward you."

The letter seemed to impress the woman. She did not indulge in any more laments; but turned towards Dora, who

was still weeping softly, with her face covered.

"Come with me, Dora," she said; "now you must live with us. We must think that it is well with your father, otherwise we should die of our trouble and anxiety."

Dora followed obediently; but it seemed to her as if all was over, as if she could not live any longer.

As they went up the stairs, her aunt forgot for the first time to caution her to be quiet, and it was quite unnecessary; Dora seemed to have no more life.

Aunt Ninette had an attic room which she had used as a store-room. This was arranged for Dora's sleeping-room. The girl followed all her aunt's directions silently, and came down when she was called to the evening meal, at which Uncle Titus appeared. He hardly ever

spoke, for he was usually buried in thought.

Later, Dora went up to her little room and wept until she fell asleep.

The next day she begged to go and see her father, and her aunt unwillingly prepared to accompany her.

The girl whispered a soft farewell, and then hastened to her own room to sob out her grief, knowing that she would never see her father again on earth.

A very different sort of life now began for Dora. She had not been sent to school during their stay in Carlsruhe. Her father seemed unwilling to make any plans for her future, but left it all to Aunt Ninette, who decided to send her every morning to a private school kept by an acquaintance of hers, and in the afternoon to a seamstress who would teach her plain

sewing. This Aunt Ninette considered as one of the most useful of employments, and she wished her niece to be so thoroughly taught that it would be a means of earning a livelihood for her.

Dora liked to study, and when she was in school with other children she would sometimes forget that her good father was no longer with her; but it was not so pleasant to sit in a narrow room during the long, hot summer afternoons, forcing a dull needle through heavy cotton cloth.

The clock kept up a monotonous tick-tack in the quiet room; but it seemed to Dora that it was always half-past four, and that the hands would never move on. The afternoons were so long and hot and still! The only sound which penetrated this attic-room was that of a distant piano; and Dora listened eagerly for this every

day, thinking how some happy child was sitting at the instrument to practise.

She could imagine nothing better in the world than to be able to play the piano; and when some fragment of a melody floated in to her, she was charmed, and would say to herself, "Oh, how happy that child must be to learn such a beautiful thing!"

These long hours with the seamstress brought many sad thoughts to the girl's heart, — memories of the pleasant walks under the lindens which could never be again. Her only comfort was her father's assurance that she would sometime go to him and her mother; but it seemed such a long time to wait!

She almost wished something would happen, — that the confinement and sewing would make her ill, and she would die.

But, at last, another thought would come and console her, —

"God stays and rules among us,
And guideth all things well."

She tried to believe this firmly; and it comforted her heart, so that even her needle seemed to go more easily.

But the days were still long, and when she went home at night it was so quiet! At supper Uncle Titus took an enormous newspaper and read and ate behind it; and her aunt spoke in a very low tone, and only when necessary, in order not to disturb him.

Dora said nothing; and, in fact, she hardly ever spoke at all now. Her aunt never had occasion to admonish her to be gentle. Yet Dora was not by nature a quiet child. On the contrary, she early displayed such activity that her father

often said, with evident satisfaction, "The child is the image of her mother, — the same versatility, the same cheerfulness and life!"

All that seemed to have disappeared.

It was very seldom that she gave her aunt any cause of complaint, for she dreaded her outbreaks of fretfulness; and so every wish, almost every impulse of life, was repressed.

One evening Dora came home filled with excitement, for she had heard some one playing, —

"Rejoice in your life,
While the lamp glows;
And, ere it fades,
Gather the rose."

Dora knew the melody, and could sing it; and the thought that it could be played like this on the piano so aroused

her that she said, as she entered the room, —

"O Aunt Ninette! it must be the greatest happiness to learn to play on the piano. Do you think that I ever, ever in my whole life can do it?"

"Dear me! how can you mention such things to me?" complained her aunt. "How can you cause me such trouble? How could such a thing happen here? Think of the dreadful noise which a piano makes in a house! and where is there a possibility of it? Where would the means and the time come from? O Dora! how can you have such unfortunate thoughts? It is enough to bear the ills that we have already, without making me anxious with such plans!"

Dora promised not to make any plans, and from that time she never spoke of the piano.

Every evening, when she had finished her school exercise, while her aunt mended, or knit, or napped, she stole up to her little attic room; and, before she closed the window, looked out at the stars which gleamed so brightly.

Just over her head there were always five near together, and Dora came to know them so well that they seemed like friends who wished to comfort her, and show her that she was not alone; and the thought came to her that they were sent by her father and mother to bring their greetings.

This was a great consolation to her every night when she came into the dark room; and, as she sent her evening prayer up to heaven, full confidence entered her heart that God would not leave her alone. Her father had often told her that who-

ever asks God for protection has nothing to fear.

So the long summer days passed. Autumn came, and a long winter followed, which was so cold and dark that Dora thought she liked the hot days better than these, when she could not open her window and see her stars, and was often so cold that she could not sleep; for the room under the roof was not warm.

Spring and summer came again, and there was no change in the quiet household.

Dora worked more than ever on the great shirts, for now she had to help the seamstress in earnest.

When the hot days came, something happened which disturbed Aunt Ninette greatly.

Uncle Titus had an attack of dizziness, and a physician was called.

"He probably has not been outside of Carlsruhe for thirty years, and, during this time, has never left his desk except to eat and sleep?" he asked, after he had examined the patient.

The question had to be answered in the affirmative.

"Good!" said the doctor. "Now off, away, at once! to-day rather than to-morrow. Go to Switzerland; to the good fresh mountain air, not too high up. You need no other medicine. But stay away six weeks at the least. Have you any choice where? No? You can think it over. I will do the same, and come to-morrow to find you ready to start."

The doctor retired, and Aunt Ninette after him; for now a flood of questions rose before her eyes which she must ask in regard to this most unexpected deci-

sion. It was of no use for the doctor to try to be very short: he was detained at the door three times as long as he had been inside.

When Aunt Ninette returned, after some time, she found Uncle Titus sitting at his desk, absorbed in his writing, as usual.

"My dear Titus," she cried, in the deepest amazement. "Can you have really heard what is before us? To break up at once, leave every thing, and go, — we do not know where! And to stay so long, six weeks or more, and not to know where and how, and with whom, and in what neighborhood! It is a frightful thought, and there you sit and write as if there were nothing before us."

"My dear, it is because this journey impends that I must use my time," answered Mr. Titus, writing industriously.

"My dear Titus, it is wonderful how readily you adapt yourself to unexpected circumstances! But this matter must be discussed: it may have serious consequences," said Aunt Ninette, very impressively. "Do think where we can go!"

"It is all the same to me, if it is only quiet; and it is sure to be that in the country," remarked Uncle Titus, working on.

"That is exactly what I am considering," continued his wife. "How we can be sure that we do not get into a house full of people, or into a noisy neighborhood. There might be a school in the neighborhood, or a mill, or a waterfall, — there are so many of them in Switzerland, — or some noisy trade might be carried on there; or there might be a place in the vicinity where a provincial court meets,

and brings together the people of an entire canton, which must cause a terrible tumult. But I have a thought, dear Titus. There is one way to avoid all that. I will write to Hamburg, where the old uncle of my blessed brother's wife lives. You know that the family lived once in Switzerland, so I can get exact information."

"It seems to me rather a roundabout way," said Uncle Titus; "and, so far as I know, the family had some unpleasant experience in Switzerland, and will hardly have kept up any connections there."

"Let me take care of that. I will arrange every thing all right, my dear Titus," ended Aunt Ninette.

She wrote a letter to Hamburg, and then betook herself to Dora's sewing-teacher to talk over the child's lonely condition with her; and it was agreed that

the seamstress should stay with her at night, and that Dora should spend all her free time out of school during the day with the seamstress.

This decision was made known to Dora when she came home. She listened in silence, and then went up to her lonely room. Here she seated herself on the bed, and many thoughts and memories arose in her heart of the time when her father had been with her, and talked to her so lovingly. Then she realized how entirely alone she was, and that, when her uncle and aunt were gone, there was nobody who loved her. She grew so sad over these thoughts that she began to weep bitterly, and, the more she thought, the more desolate her life seemed. If her uncle and aunt should die, there was nobody in the world to whom she belonged;

and then she would have to sew from morning till evening, for her aunt had told her that she must support herself sometime. She sat weeping so long that, when she took her hands away from her eyes, the room was perfectly dark. Her candle had long since burned out, and there was no longer any light in the street. But her five stars shone through the window, beaming so brightly that it seemed to Dora, all at once, as if her father was looking at her with his loving eyes, and saying trustfully, as on that other evening, —

"God stays and reigns among us,
And guideth all things well."

The starry light shone deep into her heart, and made it lighter; for what her father had said must be true, and she could have this same trust, and not fear for the future.

So she lay down, quieted, still looking at her beautiful stars.

The next evening the doctor appeared again, as he had promised, with various propositions in regard to Mr. Ehrenreich's journey.

But Aunt Ninette explained that she already had something in view; and, when she had arranged every thing, she would ask the doctor's judgment upon it.

"Only don't make it too long. Start soon, go soon!" advised the doctor, as he tried to hurry away, almost falling over Dora, who had entered so softly that he had not noticed her.

"What, what! it did not hurt you?" he said, tapping the frightened child on the shoulder. "The journey will be good for this slender creature, — only drink a great deal of milk; always drink milk."

"We have decided to leave Dora here, doctor," remarked Aunt Ninette.

"Well, that is your affair, Mrs. Ehrenreich. Only you must watch her, or you will have something worse here than with your husband."

And the doctor was outside the door.

"Doctor, doctor! What do you mean? what do you mean?" called Aunt Ninette, running down the stairs after him.

"I mean," said the doctor, "that the little person has too little blood, and cannot live unless she gets some."

"Oh, dear! must every misfortune burst upon us?" cried the woman, as she reentered the room, wringing her hands. "My dear Titus, put down your pen a minute. You have not heard what a frightful thing the doctor predicts for Dora if she does not get more blood."

"Take her with us to Switzerland: she does not make any noise," said Uncle Titus, and wrote on.

"But, my dear Titus, to make such a decision in a half-second! She does not make a noise, that is a great thing; but there is so much to consider and weigh and think over. Ah, ah!" Here Aunt Ninette observed that her husband was so buried in his work that further communications were useless.

She went into her room, and considered every thing for and against, until she finally decided that it was best to follow the doctor's advice, and take Dora with them. The answer from Hamburg came a few days later. The old uncle knew nothing about his brother's life in Switzerland more than thirty years before, only that Tannenberg, the little town, was quiet

and secluded, for his brother had always complained of the lack of society.

This account so pleased Aunt Ninette that she decided to apply to the pastor of Tannenberg and inquire for a suitable house.

The answer came soon, and was very satisfactory. The pastor wrote that Tannenberg was a little village consisting of a few scattered houses and cottages. By chance, just such a lodging as was desired could be had with the widow of a teacher, an elderly and very worthy woman, who could let two good rooms and a chamber. He enclosed the widow's address, in case further information was desired.

Aunt Ninette was so pleased that she wrote to the widow at once, expressing her joy that the houses in Tannenberg were so scattered; but it might be that

the house was in a neighborhood which must be especially avoided by the sick man; therefore she must ask if any blacksmith, any locksmith, any stone-cutter, and especially any butcher, lived near; or if there was any school, any mill, and particularly any waterfall, in the vicinity.

All these questions were answered in the most satisfactory manner. No mechanic was to be found far or near. The school and mill were so far away that no sound ever was heard from them, and there was no waterfall in the region.

The widow could further assert that she lived in the most agreeable neighborhood, with no dwelling near except the great house of Mr. Birkenfeld, which had a splendid garden and fine fields and meadows around it.

This was the most important family in

the whole region, and Mr. Birkenfeld and his wife were public benefactors. She herself was greatly indebted to them; for her little house belonged to the estate, Mr. Birkenfeld having offered it to her after her husband's death.

Thus every thing was arranged in the best way. All possible chances of disturbance were provided for, and the day for their departure was set.

With great astonishment, Dora heard that she was to go too; and, full of wonder, she packed the six great shirts which she was to take as work. She was so animated at the prospect of making them in a new place, that every thing seemed to her like a *fête*, even sewing these long seams.

At last, after many weary days, trunks and boxes stood ready, and the maid was sent for a cab.

Dora stood on the steps, and her heart beat high with expectation of the journey, and all she would see in six weeks. Finally Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette came out with numerous umbrellas and boxes, and established themselves with much difficulty in the coach, after which they sank back, exhausted by their exertions, and drove towards the quiet life of the country.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HEDGE.

FAR over the wooded valleys of Tannenberg, and over the glittering lake, looks a green height covered with fresh fields, in which red and blue and yellow flowers glimmer and gleam from early spring until late in the autumn.

On the crest of the hill stood the great house of Mr. Birkenfeld, and near by the roomy barn and stable where four spirited horses were kept, and rows of glossy cows stood chewing the fragrant hay. When Hans, the young stable boy, and the other men were busy in the fields, Battiste, the old house-servant, made the round of the

stalls to see if all was in order. He had served with Mr. Birkenfeld's father as a boy, and now, on account of his years, was promoted to be a house-servant; but he still had an oversight of the farm-work.

Great heaps of fresh hay lay on the barn floor, and the granary was filled with corn, barley, and oats, all raised on the estate, which extended far over the hill and down into the valley.

On the other side of the house was an out-building used for washing purposes; and not far from that, separated by a high, thick hedge, was a smaller house, which Mr. Birkenfeld had allowed the widow Kurd to occupy some years before.

It was a warm summer evening, and the red and white daisies in the field before the house looked up gayly to the setting sun.

In an open place by the house-door lay a shaggy dog, blinking now and then to see if any thing new was going on; but every thing was quiet, and he closed his eyes to sleep again. From time to time a young gray cat appeared in the doorway, looked at the sleeper with an energetic expression, and then retreated cautiously. Thus great quiet reigned before the house; but through the back-door, which led into the garden, there came sounds of voices, and of running here and there, denoting great activity.

Now wheels were heard. They came nearer, and stopped before the widow's house.

The dog opened his eyes an instant, and pricked up his ears; but it did not seem worth the trouble even of growling, and he slept on.

The guests whom the wagon had brought dismounted and entered the house in silence.

Mrs. Kurd, the widow, received them politely, and conducted them at once to their rooms.

Not long after, Aunt Ninette stood in the large room unpacking the great trunk, and Dora was in the small room emptying the small trunk, while Uncle Titus sat at the square table in his room, arranging his writing materials.

From time to time Dora ran to the window. She had never seen a prospect so beautiful in her life.

All around were green fields sprinkled with red and yellow flowers, below which was a forest; farther away, the blue lake crowned with snow-white mountains; while all the hills around glowed in the setting

sun. She could hardly keep away from the window, and had never known that the world could be so beautiful. Her aunt called her to take some things which had been put in the large trunk.

"O Aunt Ninette! how beautiful it is here!" cried Dora, as she entered, louder than she had spoken since she lived with her aunt.

"Sh! sh! How you rush in!" said her aunt, checking her. "Your uncle is sitting there, already plunged deep in his work."

Dora took her things, and, in passing the window, said,—

"May I stop a minute to see what there is from this window?"

"You may look a moment, but there is nobody there," was the answer. "It is a beautiful, quiet garden. From the win-

dow opposite you can see the great yard in front of the house; nothing else except a dog asleep. It is to be hoped he is always so. You may take a look over there too."

Dora had opened the window towards the garden, letting in the fragrance of jasmine and mignonette from the flower-beds. The high, green hedge stretched far, far away, so large was the garden; and inside were green grass-plots, flower-beds, and thickly-grown arbors. How beautiful it must be from the inside!

Nobody was to be seen; but some one must have been there, for near the house-door was a wonderful arch made of two high bean-poles covered with fir branches. A large piece of cardboard was suspended from this framework, on which something was written in large letters.

All at once a great noise was heard from the yard in front. Dora ran to the other window and looked out. A large wagon stood there, and the two brown horses were stamping impatiently.

Out of the house rushed one, two, three, four, — still more, — five, six, boys and girls; and "I! I! I will go on the box," called one and another, louder and louder; and, in the midst of the tumult, the dog sprang up, jumping on one after the other, and barking for joy.

Aunt Ninette's ears had not been greeted by such a noise time out of mind.

"For Heaven's sake, what is going on?" she cried, horrified. "What sort of a place have we got into?"

"Oh, come, aunt; look, look! they are all getting into the carriage," cried Dora, in ecstasy, who had never seen any thing so merry in her life.

Just then a boy sprang upon a wheel and climbed up to the box; then he leaned over and reached his arm towards the dog, which kept jumping up with barks of delight.

"Come, Schnurri; come, Schnurri!" called the boy continually, pulling the ears and paws and shaggy fur of the dog until the coachman threw him up with one swing. In the mean time the oldest brother took up a struggling girl, and tossed her into the carriage. "Me too! Me too, Jule! Toss me higher, higher still!" cried two boys at once, both springing on their brother. The toss was repeated with loud shouts, and then the tall boy sprang in himself, drawing in finally an older sister who had waited until the little ones were placed. Then the door was shut with a loud bang, for Julius had strong muscles.

The horses gave a pull; but another cry arose.

"If Schnurri goes, then Philomela must go too!"

"Trina, Trina!" called the little girl, loudly; "give me Philomela. Get Philomela!"

The maid appeared, and took in the situation. She laughed, picked up the gray cat from the stone step, and threw it into the coach; and now a loud crack of the whip, and they were gone.

In great alarm Aunt Ninette hastened into her husband's room to see what impression this scene had made on him. He sat peacefully at his table, but had fastened all his windows.

"My dear Titus, who could have suspected this? What is to be done?" exclaimed his wife, complainingly.

"The house yonder seems to be very rich in children. We cannot help that: we must close our windows," he said, indifferently.

"But, my dear Titus, remember that you have come here to breathe fresh mountain air. You never go out, so you must have the air in your room. If it begins so, what will it be, and what shall we do if it continues?"

"We must move," said Uncle Titus, going on with his writing. This thought quieted Aunt Ninette, and she returned to her room.

In the mean time, Dora had been working very industriously in her little room; for a great wish had arisen in her heart, and she knew that every thing must be in order before it could be carried out.

The merriment and life of the children

had so charmed her that she was anxious to see them come home, and to watch what happened. Perhaps they would go into the garden where the arch was, and then she could see them nearer; for she had observed that Mrs. Kurd's little garden was separated from the large one only by a hedge, and there must be an opening somewhere through which she could look.

Her heart was so full of the plan that she had not thought of what her aunt would say. When she went down to make her request, Mrs. Kurd had just come to announce supper, and Aunt Ninette said it would be too late when the meal was over.

But, on Mrs. Kurd's assurance that the garden was perfectly safe, and that no one ever came into it, she consented at last.

Dora could hardly eat, in her eagerness to be out.

"You may go now, but not far away from the house," said her aunt, finally.

The girl ran towards the hedge to see if there was any place where she could look through. It was a white-thorn hedge, and had grown so high and thick that Dora could neither look through nor over it; but down near the ground there was an opening. It was necessary to stoop down to see through it; but this was no drawback to Dora, who was very eager to see and hear these children. Never before had she seen such a family, — great and small, boys and girls, and all so happy and gay.

She bent down to look through the hole.

Nothing was to be heard: all was quiet in the garden. The fragrance of the flowers was so delicious that Dora could

not get enough. How grand it must be to sit under that tree on which red apples were gleaming, and under which a table was half-concealed, with many white objects upon it!

Dora quite forgot herself at the sight; but now, — now, — that was the carriage, and all the merry voices. The children had returned.

For a while, all was still again. They were in the house, but now they all came towards the garden.

Mr. Birkenfeld had returned from a long journey, and his children had been to the steamer landing to meet him, while their mother made the last preparations at home for a festive reception, and had the table arranged under the apple-tree. She ran out to welcome the returned traveller when the carriage stopped in

front of the house; and there was such a tumult of voices, as they all went up the steps into the sitting-room, and the greetings were so violent, that the father said, —

"Now in turn, children. Take turns, — the smallest first, and so on. Begin now, little Hunne: what have you to tell me?"

So saying, he took up the little five-year-old, who was named Huldreich originally; but the name Hunne, which he had given himself when a little fellow, had clung to him. Julius, the eldest boy, declared that his flat nose reminded one of his Asiatic brethren; but his mother would not allow this.

The little fellow had so much to tell his father, that the latter said, —

"By and by, little Hunne. We will talk

more later. Now I must speak to Wili and Lili.

"Well, always cheerful and bright? And have you been obedient the whole time?"

"Mostly," answered Wili, somewhat timidly; and Lili, reminded of many deviations from the path of obedience, thought it most discreet to say nothing.

Wili and Lili, the eight-year-old twins, were inseparable companions, and often engaged in things which they knew ought not to be done.

"And you, Rolf, how are you?" said the father, turning to his twelve-year-old son. "Have you learned your Latin well, and made fine riddles?"

"Both, papa; but the others would not guess them: they are too lazy to think, and mamma has no time."

"That is too bad; and you, Paula," continued the father, "are you still walking alone in the garden? No friend yet?"

"Of course not, papa; but it is beautiful that you have come," answered the girl, embracing her papa.

"And Julius is spending his vacation in some useful way, of course?" said Mr. Birkenfeld, giving his hand to his eldest son.

"Combining the useful with the agreeable," responded Julius. "You know, father, that the hazel-nuts are ripe, and I am watching the harvest very carefully; and I can ride Castor at the same time, so that he will not get lazy."

Julius had attended a gymnasium in a distant city for several years, and was now spending his vacation at home.

"Now, papa," he continued, "I must beg you to adjourn to the garden, where great surprises await you."

This last remark cost him dear; for Wili and Lili darted upon him, and pulled and pinched and nudged him, to make him understand that he must not speak about the surprises.

He defended himself as well as he could.

"Lili, you little fly, let go. I will take it back." And turning to his father, he said, "I mean in the garden, where mother has had things carried which are not to be despised in celebrating a feast."

"That is grand! Perhaps we shall find a table set in the garden under my apple-tree. I call that a surprise!" cried the father, joyfully. "So come one and all."

And, giving his arm to his wife, he

went out, and the whole flock after him, Lili and Wili in a state of great satisfaction because their father supposed that that was the only surprise for him.

When they stepped out of the door, they passed under a high arch, with lanterns on both sides which illumined a large card, on which something was printed.

"Ah, ah!" said the father, in astonishment. "A grand triumphal arch, and a poem of welcome! Let us read it;" and he read aloud, —

"We are ready here to greet you
Beside the garden gate;
Our hearts rejoice to meet you,
We've had so long to wait.

"To-night let mirth and pleasure
Reign high, and banish pain;

Our gladness knows no measure,
That you are home again."

"Very good! Rolf must be the author, is he not?"

"Yes, yes," cried Wili and Lili. "Rolf made it, but we thought of it. He wrote the poetry, and Jule put up the poles, and we got the fir branches."

"This is a splendid reception, children," cried the delighted father. "And you have put up so many red and blue and yellow lights that it seems like fairyland. And now my apple-tree! I must go nearer."

In truth the garden was bewitching.

Julius had tied paper lanterns of all colors on the branches of trees and shrubs. The old apple-tree was so brilliantly lighted that it looked like an enormous Christmas-tree, and the red apples

gleaming among the lights made it wonderfully beautiful.

The light fell upon a white-covered table beneath, on which large roasts and great apple-cakes were arranged in tempting array.

"I call this a banquet-hall!" cried the happy father. "Every thing will taste well here, surely. But here is another inscription!"

A large white card was suspended from the tall bushes behind, on which was written, —

"My first holds water, cool and clear;
My next is a verb you often hear;
My whole's the occasion of our feast to-day,
Because papa has been long away."

"A riddle, which Rolf has dedicated to me!" exclaimed Mr. Birkenfeld. "I will

soon apply myself to its solution. Now let us sit down and enjoy our reunion."

Such a lively conversation ensued, concerning all that had happened during their separation, that there seemed to be no end to it. In one of the pauses Mr. Birkenfeld drew out a large package from under his seat and began to undo it.

The children looked on eagerly, knowing that presents were coming.

First appeared a pair of shining spurs for Julius, a pretty blue book for Paula, and a great bow and quiver with two feathered arrows for Rolf; and, as their father drew out the arrows, and showed the sharp iron points, he said, —

"This is for Rolf, who knows how to handle it. Wili and Lili must never touch it; they might injure themselves and others with it."

Then came for the twins a splendid Noah's ark, with a pair of every kind of animal in it, and Noah's family, — the men with staves in their hands for the long journey, and the women provided with sunshades, which they might find useful in embarking.

For Hunne there was a wonderful nut-cracker, which opened its mouth so wide for the nut that it seemed very mournful until it was screwed up, when it would bite so hard that the whole kernel would fall out.

The presents were examined and admired with continual outbursts of joy, until their mother reminded them that it was long past bedtime.

"But who has guessed the riddle?" asked their father, in a loud voice.

No one had, for no one had thought of it but Rolf himself.

"I have solved it myself," continued Mr. Birkenfeld, as no one answered. "It is 'Welcome,' is it not, Rolf? And I thank you for the riddle."

Just then a fearful cry arose. "Fire! fire!" Everybody sprang up from the table. Battiste and Trina rushed upon the scene with tubs and pails, and Hans came from the barn with a great bucket. Everybody ran about and cried wildly, "The bush is burning! The hedge is burning!" There was a terrible tumult.

"Dora! Dora!" called a frightened voice in the cottage.

Dora had been so absorbed in what she had seen that she had entirely forgotten every thing else. She must have been watching for two hours. She hurried in to find her aunt running wildly about, bringing out heaps of clothing from the closet in order to be ready to escape.

"Aunt Ninette," said Dora, timidly, "don't be afraid. The fire is out: the garden is dark."

It was true. The lanterns had been extinguished, and every thing was dark.

"It is terrible! Who could have imagined such a thing?" fretted her aunt. "Now go to bed, Dora. To-morrow we will decide whether we will change our lodgings or remove from the place."

Dora retired, but not to sleep. The lights on the apple-tree danced before her eyes, and she heard again the children's merry voices talking with their papa, and thought of her own father, who used to talk with her.

It seemed as if she would be separated from some one she loved if her aunt went away; and the thought drove sleep away.

She seemed to see these children and

their kind papa standing with her father, who said, —

"God stays and reigns among us,
And guideth all things well."

Then she fell asleep; but in her dreams she still saw the lights, and the shining tree, and the merry children in the garden.

After the quickly extinguished fire an investigation revealed the fact that Wili and Lili had wished to make Rolf's riddle into a transparency, such as they had had at Christmas, when "Glory to God in the highest" appeared in beautiful red, transparent letters above the Christmas-tree. They had climbed upon the high step which had been used in hanging up the motto, and held two candles near it. The lights were brought nearer and nearer the paper, until it burst into flame, and

the fire was communicated to the nearest branches.

The twins confessed their unsuccessful undertaking, and, on account of the *fête*, escaped with a mild reproof, and a strict command never to try any experiments with fire again.

Soon all was still in the great house, and the moon looked down peacefully on the trees and sleeping flowers in the quiet garden.

CHAPTER IV.

ALL SIX.

"We must leave, Mrs. Kurd," were Aunt Ninette's first words at breakfast the next morning. "We have come into a fearful neighborhood, and must go away to-day."

Mrs. Kurd stood in the middle of the room, speechless with amazement. She looked at Mrs. Ehrenreich as if she did not understand her.

"I am in earnest, Mrs. Kurd: we must go," repeated Aunt Ninette.

"But in the whole of Tannenberg you can find no better or more desirable neighborhood than this," began Mrs.

Kurd, at last, recovering a little from her astonishment.

"But, Mrs. Kurd, did you not hear that unheard-of noise last evening? That was worse than all the things I mentioned to you which we wished to avoid."

"But, Mrs. Ehrenreich, it was only the children, and yesterday was a family festival, when they were especially merry."

"If family festivals are celebrated here, first with shouts of joy, and then an alarm of fire, the neighborhood is not only noisy but dangerous. We must really leave."

"I do not think that the fire was a part of the festival," responded Mrs. Kurd. "It was accidental, and was soon put out. It is a very orderly family, and I cannot comprehend how the gentleman and lady could wish to remove on account of the neighborhood. They would certainly re-

pent it, and would not find such lodgings elsewhere in Tannenberg."

Aunt Ninette composed herself somewhat, and sat down to breakfast; and Uncle Titus soon appeared, followed by Dora.

In the other house breakfast was over. Mr. Birkenfeld had gone to his business, and the mother was busied with household affairs.

Rolf had long since gone to his Latin lesson, which he had with the pastor of a neighboring parish.

Paula had her music-lesson with Fräulein Hanenwinkel, and Wili and Lili were preparing their lessons. Little Hunne sat by his table in the corner, looking thoughtfully at the doleful nut-cracker.

Julius came into the room from his morning ride, whip in hand, and the new spurs on his feet.

"Who will draw off my riding-boots?" he cried, seating himself, and admiring his spurs.

In an instant Wili and Lili were on the spot, glad of a new field of labor. Each child took hold of one of the long boots, and, before he knew it, Julius was off his seat; for they pulled with all their might.

The boots did not come off, but Julius did.

The chair came, too; and Julius cried loudly, "Stop, stop!"

This brought little Hunne to the rescue, who grasped the chair, and tried to hold it; but he was pulled along too, as if he were sliding on the ice.

Wili and Lili wished to finish their work, and continued pulling, while Julius kept shouting, "Stop, stop!—

"O Wilien and Lilien,
You terrible children!"

Little Hunne cried for help as loudly as he could, which brought their mother. This mended matters. Wili and Lili let go, Julius sprang upon the chair, and Hunne managed to balance himself on his feet.

"But, Julius, how can you make the children so wild?" she said. "You ought to know better."

"Yes, yes; I will do better," said Julius. "But, really, mamma, I am assisting you in your training in this way; for as long as I employ Wili and Lili with useful bodily exercise, they are prevented from doing some horrible mischief."

"Julius, Julius! Begin to reform now," said his mother, warningly. "And you, Lili, go to the piano down-stairs and prac-

tise diligently until Fräulein Hanenwinkel is done with Paula. Wili may study till then. I should like it, Julius, if you would amuse your little brother for a while until I come."

Julius willingly promised to do his best, and Lili hastened to the piano.

She was so excited that she did not succeed very well with scales; so she decided that her little pieces would go better, and she began to play, —

"Rejoice in your life
While the lamp glows;
And, ere it fades,
Gather the rose."

Uncle Titus and his wife had just finished their breakfast when the boot scene began. The former betook himself to his room and closed the windows. His wife called their landlady, that she might hear

what was going on; but the affair did not seem to make the same impression on her.

"Ah, they are merry again," she said, quite pleased; and when Mrs. Ehrenreich represented to her that such a noise was not suited to restore invalids to health, she suggested that, if Mr. Ehrenreich would take a little walk, it might do him good: he could go up into the woods, where it was beautifully still.

She added that things would not always be as lively at the other house, — that the young man was at home now on his vacation, and would soon go away.

Just then Lili's joyful song rang out with the piano.

"That, too! Is that also the young man who is soon to leave?" asked Aunt Ninette, in great excitement. "It is be-

yond endurance! always something new, — something noisy, ringing, frightful! Mrs. Kurd, is it possible you have never heard that before?"

"I have really never considered it unpleasant. The little one plays so well already that it is a pleasure to hear her," remarked Mrs. Kurd.

"And where is Dora gone, all at once? She seems to be bewitched, and to overstep all bounds; and to-day her work must be taken in hand. Dora, Dora! have you gone down already?" called her aunt, fretfully.

Dora was at her lookout in the hedge, and was listening with wonder to the merry song which Lili was drumming. She appeared at once, however, at her aunt's call; and a place was arranged for her by the window, where she was to

sit during the day and work at her shirts.

"We cannot remain here," were her aunt's last words, as she left the room. This almost brought the tears into Dora's eyes; for it was her dearest wish to stay where there were so many pleasant things to see and hear, which she could enjoy through her hole in the hedge. She tried to think how she could hinder their departure; but nothing suggested itself.

It was now eleven o'clock, and Rolf came storming home. He ran into the kitchen, when he saw his mother there.

"Mamma, mamma!" he called eagerly, before he was inside. "Now you must guess quick. 'My first'"—

"My dear Rolf," interrupted his mother, "I must beg you to find another guesser: I have really no time now. Go to Paula: she has just gone into the sitting-room."

Rolf obeyed.

"Paula," he cried, on the way, "do guess! 'My first, one is'"—

"No, Rolf, please, not now," returned Paula. "I am looking for my exercise book, and must go to make a French translation. There comes Fräulein Hanenwinkel: she is good at guessing."

Rolf sprang upon her.

"Fräulein Hanenwinkel, 'My first, one is often'"—

"No time, Rolf, no time," pleaded the Fräulein. "Mr. Julius is sitting there in the corner cracking nuts: go to him. *Auf wiedersehen.*"

Fräulein Hanenwinkel was so fond of nd had so appropriated this form of farewell that she employed it on all occasions.

If, for example, an importunate scissors-rinder appeared, she said, regularly, "Are

you here again? Do stay where you belong! *Auf wiedersehen!*" and the door was shut.

When she had to dismiss pedlers, she said, as she closed the door upon them, "You know that we do not need any thing. Do not come any more. *Auf wiedersehen!*"

This was her peculiarity.

It was true that Julius was sitting in the corner with little Hunne, who was eagerly watching the dubious face of his nut-cracker, as it bit nut after nut. Rolf joined them.

"Julius, you have time," he said; "now guess, —

"'My first, one is often told to mind, —
A slang phrase not used by people refined;
My second is often given at school
To bad boys who whisper and break the rule.

My whole is a statesman, the first in our land,
Who guides all affairs with a powerful hand.'"

"That must be *Bismarck*," said quick-witted Julius.

"Why, how quickly you guessed it!" said Rolf, in astonishment.

"Now it is my turn, Rolf. Let me see, — I have thought of something; and Julius began to declaim, impressively, —

"My first on four feet goes,
And troubles our repose
By sending forth my last.
My whole, — please state it,
All students make it,
Professors hate it."

"That is difficult," said Rolf, who needed time to think. "Wait, Jule, I will soon get it;" and he seated himself on a stool to think.

Julius and little Hunne still kept on with their work, the former now and then throwing a shell at a certain mark to prove his skill.

"I know," cried Rolf, in delight. "It is *cat-calls*."

"O Rolf, how you guess!" cried Julius, horrified. "Quite the contrary; it is music, — *cat-music*."

"Yes," said Rolf, somewhat taken aback; "but, wait! what is this? 'My first'" —

"No, no; it is too much exertion. Pray excuse me, I must go and see to Castor;" and Julius jumped up and hurried to the barn.

"It is too bad," said Rolf, sighing. "Nobody pays any attention to me, and I have made four more beautiful riddles; and you cannot guess, Hunne: you are too young."

"Yes, I can," said Hunne, boldly.

"Oh, I can't wait for you!" and Rolf tried to hurry away; but this was not so easy, for Hunne had tried his skill in making a riddle.

"Wait, wait, Rolf!" he cried, holding his brother's jacket firmly. "It is my turn now, and you must guess. 'My first is not to drink, but to eat'"—

"It must be a nut-cracker," cried Rolf, running away as fast as he could; but Hunne ran nimbly after him, shouting, "You have not guessed it! You have not guessed it! Guess, Rolf, guess!"

And Wili and Lili came running towards him from the other side, shouting, "Rolf, Rolf, a riddle! Just guess," and Lili held a strip of paper close to his eyes, while their little brother kept crying, "Guess, Rolf; guess, Rolf!"

The riddle-maker found himself in a great dilemma.

"Well, give me room to guess in," he cried, waving his arms to clear the space about him.

"You can't guess it; I am going to Jule," said Hunne, somewhat slightingly, as he walked away.

Then Rolf seized the narrow, yellowed strip of paper which Lili still held towards him, and looked at it wonderingly. In a child's hand, which he had never seen before, were written the enigmatical words, —

"My hand in
And there I
Never to
But stern fate
Life's streams
And you
This sheet we
And may it

Until we
And if it
We place them
There let them."

"It is a rebus, perhaps," said Rolf, thoughtfully. "I will soon guess it, only let me alone; for I must think very hard."

There was not much time for this, as the dinner-bell rang almost immediately; and the whole family was soon assembled around the table in the great dining-room.

"What good thing has my little Hunne done to-day?" asked papa, when all were helped.

"I have made a riddle, papa; but Rolf will never guess my riddles, and I can't find Jule, and the others do not give me any attention."

"Yes, papa," interposed Rolf, eagerly, "and I have made four or five beautiful

riddles; but nobody has time to guess them except those who cannot understand them; and when Jule has guessed one that is all he will do, and I could make six every day."

"Yes, yes, papa!" cried Lili and Wili together; "and we have found a difficult riddle, — so difficult that Rolf cannot guess it. Yes, and it is a rebus."

"Only wait, I will find it out," asserted Rolf.

"The house is full of riddles," said the father. "We seem to have a riddle fever. We could employ a man to do nothing but solve riddles."

"If I could only find such a man!" sighed Rolf; for to make riddles for some one who would listen to them intelligently appeared to him the most desirable thing on earth.

After dinner, the whole family went out under the apple-tree, — the mother, Fräulein Hanenwinkel, and the girls, armed with their sewing and knitting-work. Even little Hunne had a questionable piece of work in hand, on which he made long stitches with a red thread, — he wished to embroider a horse-blanket for Julius.

Julius had brought a book, at his mother's request, to read aloud. Rolf sat opposite, under the ash-tree, studying his Latin. Wili was near him, trying to learn his sentences; but he looked first at the birds up in the branches, then at the laborers in the field, and then at the red apples upon the tree; for Wili loved things which can be seen, and only with the greatest trouble, and usually only with Lili's help, could he get any others into

his head: consequently his afternoon study was usually changed into a continual contemplation of the landscape.

Julius seemed to have a similar feeling to-day, for he did not open his book; but gazed here and there, and especially at his sister.

"Paula," he said, at last, "your face has looked all day as if you were a walking collection of troubles."

"Pray begin to read, Julius: then we shall hear something better than such comparisons, which no one can understand," responded Paula.

"Yes, Julius, I think it would be well to begin," said his mother. "But I must say, Paula, that for several days you have been so silent and reserved, that I should like to ask what has so put you out of humor with all your surroundings."

"But, mamma, to whom should I open my heart? I have no friend in all Tannenberg, nor anywhere else. I have nobody in whom I can confide."

Her mother suggested that she might have more intercourse with her sister Lili, or with Fräulein Hanenwinkel, who could be her friends.

But Paula declared that the former was much too young, and the latter too old, for her. The Fräulein was just twenty years old; but that seemed to Paula an advanced age. For a friendship, two people must be of the same age, she thought, and have the same feelings, and must know at once when they meet that they belong together, and will never leave each other; and if one has no such friendship, there is no real joy in any thing, because one cannot impart his thoughts and experiences to any one.

"Paula has gone back into the age of romance," said Julius, seriously. "I am sure that for some time she has peered into every strawberry blossom to see if it will not suddenly bring out a secret flag and burst forth into a Maid of Orleans; and she looks carefully at every mole in the fields, to discover whether it wears a seal-ring on the little finger, and, like an exiled Wasa, is seeking its kingdom among the mouse-holes."

"Don't tease so," said his mother, reprovingly. "It is true that there is something beautiful in such a deep friendship as Paula longs for. I have experienced it myself, and the pleasantest memories of my life belong to that time."

"Oh, tell us about your friend Lili, mamma!" pleaded Paula, who had already heard the story several times, and consid-

ered this an ideal friendship. Lili joined in the petition with greater urgency, because she knew nothing of this friend whose name she bore.

"Really, mamma, am I named for this friend?" she asked, to assure herself.

"Yes," said her mother. "You all know the great factory below us on the mountain with a fine dwelling-house near it in a great shady garden. That is where Lili lived, and I can well remember how it was that I first saw her. I was about six years old, and was playing in the garden of the parsonage with my simple dolls, which I had seated on the ground on flat stones, which I picked up for this purpose wherever I could find them; for I had no such doll-houses, with chairs and sofas, as you have now.

"You know that your grandfather was

pastor in Tannenberg, and every thing was very simple in our house. My playfellows, two children from the neighborhood, were standing near me as usual, looking on without saying a word.

"They never showed the active sympathy which the occasion, in my opinion, demanded. They usually only stared, whatever I did, which was often very irritating to me.

"That day, as I was sitting on the ground to place my dolls in a circle, a lady came into the garden and asked for my father. Before I could answer, a child who was with her sprang towards me, and began to look at every thing carefully.

"Behind every flat stone I had set one up for a back against which the dolls could lean. This so pleased the child that she began at once to play with the

greatest interest; and I was so delighted with her, and her floating curls and pretty speech, that I entirely forgot every thing else, and looked and listened to what my dolls said and did, until the strange lady asked again for my father.

"From that day Lili and I were inseparable friends, and for me began such a beautiful life as I had never dreamed of. I shall never forget the glorious, untroubled days which I spent in the beautiful house below. I was treated by the loving mother and excellent father like an own child. Lili's parents were from North Germany. Her father had bought the factory through a friend, and here he expected to remain.

"Lili was their only child; and when they discovered that Lili and I were so fond of each other, they frequently asked,

as a special favor, that I should come and make them a long visit. I was often there for days, and it seemed to me like a long-continued festival.

"What splendid playthings Lili had! I had never seen such things in my life. I remember especially a quantity of plaster images with which we played for whole days. We each had families of them, to whose members we gave different names, and with whom we passed through varied experiences, sharing in their joys and sorrows.

"Each time I returned home from my visit richly laden with presents, and, not long after, another invitation would come for me. Later, we had our lessons together, partly from my father, and partly from the teacher; and then we began to read together, and had our heroes and

heroines, who filled our lives as our plaster families had done before.

"My merry Lili, with her flying brown locks and laughing eyes, was a creature all fire and life, freshness and vivacity.

"And so we passed happy years, without suspecting that our precious companionship could ever end.

"Then all at once, when we were eleven years old, my father told me — I can still remember the very spot in the garden where I heard the dreadful words — that Mr. Blank, Lili's father, had given up his manufactory, and would return to Germany.

"As nearly as I could understand, Mr. Blank had been misinformed from the outset. The business was not what it had been represented, and he had to give up the whole thing at a great loss. My

father was very sad, and said that great wrong had been done, and that Mr. Blank had lost every thing.

"I was overwhelmed. That I could lose Lili, and that she must be poor, were two facts which almost crushed me, and, for a long time, destroyed the joy of my life.

"The next day Lili came to take leave of me.

"We wept bitterly, for it seemed to us that we could not endure life when we were separated. We promised to be always true, and to do all that we could to meet again; and at last we sat down and made a final poem, — we had made so many verses together! We cut our poem in two parts, and each one took a half to keep as a bond of union between us until we should meet and place them together again.

"Lili departed. For some years we corresponded, and her letters were the only consolation of my lonely, simple country life. When I was sixteen or seventeen, Lili wrote to me that her father had decided to go to America, and she would write to me at once when they were settled there. I never received another letter from her.

"Whether her letters were lost, or whether the family did not find a permanent home anywhere, and she did not write on that account, or whether she thought that our lives were too widely separated to keep up any connection, I do not know. Perhaps Lili is no longer living; perhaps she did not live long after that time: that is quite possible.

"For years I have mourned for my first, dearest, and never-to-be-forgotten friend to whom I owe so much.

"In vain have I tried to get any information regarding her; I have never been able to discover a trace of her."

Mrs. Birkenfeld was silent, and a mournful expression came into her face. The children were quite depressed by the end of the story; and one after the other said, sighing, "What a pity! What a pity!"

Little Hunne, however, who had listened attentively, pressed close to his mother, and said, tenderly, "Don't be sad, mamma. When I am big, I will go to America and get Lili for you."

Rolf and Wili had also come near to listen; and the former, after looking thoughtfully at a bit of paper he held, said, —

"Mamma, was the poem that you cut in two parts written on a narrow strip of paper, and did it look like a rebus?"

"Perhaps, Rolf; I should think it might. Why do you ask?"

"See," said the boy, holding up his paper strip. "Do you think this could be half?"

"Rolf! really!" cried his mother, in great excitement, "I thought the paper was lost. I had cherished it for years, and then it disappeared, and I believed it lost forever. Finally, I only thought of it when I told the story of my childish friendship. Where did you find it?"

"We found it," cried Wili and Lili, —"we found it in the old Bible. We wished to see once more if Eve's face is still scratched," they explained further.

"Yes, that is another reminder of my Lili," said their mother, smiling. "She did that once in her excitement, when we had pictured to ourselves how lovely it

would be if we were now in Paradise, and she grew so angry with Eve, because she had eaten the apple, that she scratched and marked her face as a punishment.

"But my old rhymes! I cannot remember what they were, it was so long ago. Only think, children, over thirty years!" And she laid the old strip of paper carefully in her work-basket. Then she told the children to gather up their things and follow her, for it was almost supper-time, and their father always appeared punctually. Every thing was soon taken away, and one after another they disappeared under the arch, which was still standing.

For a long time Dora had been looking through her hole in the hedge at the listening company under the apple-tree. When they were gone, she drew a deep

breath, and said, softly, "Oh, if I could only once be over in the garden with them!"

At supper Aunt Ninette said, "At last a couple of hours without a deafening noise! If it could continue, it would be possible to stay here. What do you think, dear Titus?"

Dora waited breathlessly for her uncle's answer.

"The air in these rooms is very close, and I feel more dizziness than in Carlsruhe," he said.

The disappointed child looked down at her plate, and had no more appetite.

Her aunt broke out in complaints. If the whole journey should prove entirely useless for her husband! Perhaps they ought to have gone away the very first day.

At last she comforted herself with the thought that, if it was quiet the next day, they might have the windows open; and Dora clung to this hope, for, as long as they remained, there was the possibility that she might some time join the children in the flower-garden.

CHAPTER V.

A FLOOD.

THERE were certain times when little Hunne could not keep still, but wandered restlessly about the house.

Nobody would give him any attention, and he was sent from one to another until his mother could devote herself to him. These uneasy periods always came at the most inconvenient times, especially on Saturday mornings, when everybody was busy; and such was the case on the next day after the occurrences related.

For a long time Hunne had been wandering among the sofas and chairs which were placed in the corridor during the

sweeping. The whole house was in confusion.

The child first looked for his mother, whom he finally found in the attic sorting the linen. He was at once sent down.

"Go and look for Paula," his mother said. "Perhaps she is free now."

Paula was at the piano.

"Go away, Hunne; I must practise," she said. "I cannot guess any riddles." For Hunne had caught Rolf's fever, and was always trying to introduce his riddle of the nut-cracker. "There comes Fräulein Hanenwinkel; go to her."

"Fräulein Hanenwinkel, 'My first is not to drink, but to eat,'" cried the child.

"No, Hunne, excuse me," was the hasty answer. "If you have gone to riddle-making, what will happen? I have no time for it. See, there is Mr. Julius getting off his horse; go to him."

The child went on.

"Julius, nobody will guess my riddles, and Fräulein Hanenwinkel least of all. She says that you ought to do it."

"Well, what is it, Hunne? Drive on," said Julius.

"My first is not to drink, but to eat," began Hunne; and then stopped.

"Good, Hunne! go on."

"You must finish it yourself: do you see, Julius? Then comes '*nut-cracker*,'" explained Hunne.

"Yes, that is very clear. But come, Hunne: since Fräulein Hanenwinkel has been so kind to me, I will send her a riddle. I will say it to you, and you must learn it to repeat to her."

So Julius taught the little fellow to say some lines playing upon the Fräulein's name, and then sent him off.

Fräulein Hanenwinkel was in the schoolroom with Wili and Lili, who were struggling with their examples. They were distracted beyond all measure to-day, and seemed to have something especial in mind. Hunne entered.

"A riddle, Fräulein Hanenwinkel," he announced, briefly.

"No; decidedly no. It is no time for riddles," she said, firmly.

But Hunne had Julius to back him, and repeated, —

"Julius made it, Julius made it."

"Well, tell it quickly," said the Fräulein, relenting a little.

Very firmly and plainly Hunne repeated his riddle.

Fräulein Hanenwinkel was always quick at repartee, for she was a native of Bremen; and she quickly wrote something

which she gave to the child, saying, "There, take this to Mr. Julius, and tell him that, since he has used my name so beautifully in a riddle, I do not wish to be behind him. But do not come again, Hunne; we must not be disturbed at our arithmetic."

Wili and Lili did not appear to fear this possibility at all. While their teacher had been writing, they had put their heads together, and were evidently concocting some grand project.

This plan seemed to so fill their minds that there was no room left for the simplest reckoning; and Fräulein Hanenwinkel finally closed the book with a sigh, remarking that if numbers were only so many foolish tricks, they would grasp them with the greatest eagerness. This observation was not very unjust, for these

children had a remarkable capacity for such tricks. They had planned something of the sort even now.

As soon as their lessons were done, they rushed energetically to the wash-house, and held a secret consultation among the tubs of various sizes.

And immediately after dinner they ran again to the same place. They were always free Saturday afternoons; so they had a beautiful time before them. Fräulein Hanenwinkel had to overlook them; but, when she saw them go into the wash-house, she supposed it was for the purpose of washing doll-clothes, as they often did, and was delighted that they had found occupation which would last for several hours.

But Wili and Lili had greater plans to-day than a doll's wash. They had played

many times with the beautiful Noah's ark which their father had brought them, and appreciated deeply the wonderful experiences of life in an ark. It occurred to Lili to undertake such a voyage in an ark, and Wili heartily approved. They had already thought out all the necessary preparations in a most practical way; for Lili always kept her eyes open, and knew how every thing was done.

Among the different wash-tubs was one of medium size which they had chosen for the ark. There was room in it for the animals if they would keep still in their places.

Of course Schnurri and Philomela were to be the animals.

They were both called. Schnurri came growling; but Philomela rubbed herself against Lili, who took her up, saying,

"You are much better, Philomela, than old Schnurri."

It was always so. Philomela was so named because she always purred so melodiously, and Schnurri got his name because he always snarled and growled; but there was reason for this.

They were charged to live peaceably together, and not to harm each other; and Schnurri obeyed this rule most carefully. When they had their dinner out of the same dish, he would eat very slowly, as she had to take much smaller mouthfuls.

Philomela, on the contrary, was one moment very friendly and tender towards Schnurri, especially if any one was near; and then, all at once, she would raise her paw and box his ears. Then Schnurri snarled; and, as this happened very often, he kept on snarling until the name was

fastened upon him, most unjustly, for he was by nature amiable and peaceful.

But water must be procured for a voyage in an ark. Lili knew that the water for washing was brought from the spring near the house in a long wooden tube, one end of which was placed in the tub that was to be filled. She thought that, if it were allowed to flow over the floor instead of into the tub, there would be enough to float the ark after a little time.

Every thing was thought out; but how could they get the long tube? Together Wili and Lili planned what would induce Battiste and Trina to assist in the undertaking. Old Battiste and young Trina bore a relation to each other similar to that between Schnurri and Philomela.

Battiste had served in the family for long years, and knew how every thing

should be managed. The consideration in which he was held vexed Trina a little, who had come a few years since to take the place of an aunt who had grown too old for service. When any members of the family were present, she was very civil to Battiste; but, when they were alone, she liked to annoy him.

The children had noticed this state of things long ago, and had often used it to their own advantage.

Wili and Lili preferred to ask Trina, who was more apt to agree to any thing new and unusual; but the thing which they wished was in Battiste's charge. So Lili decided to seek his assistance, while Wili guarded the dog and cat. Battiste was in the barn looking over seeds.

Lili placed herself in front of him with her hands behind her, as her papa stood when he was talking on business.

"Battiste," she began, very decidedly, "where is the tube which is used to bring water from the spring to the tub?"

Battiste looked at her thoughtfully, and asked, —

"Has your mamma sent you?"

"No; I come for myself."

"So! Then I don't know where the spout is," was the reply.

"But, Battiste," explained Lili, "I only wish a little water from the spring. Why can't I have it?"

"I know the game," growled Battiste. "Now a little fire, and now a little water, and always some mischief. You will get nothing from me, I say, — nothing from me."

"It is all the same to me," declared Lili, going straight to the kitchen, where Trina was scrubbing.

"Trina," said Lili, coaxingly, "come and give us the water-spout. Battiste will not do any thing for us. You will give it to us, will you not?"

"Yes, of course," said Trina. "You would certainly be allowed to have a little water; but wait until the old bear comes out, then I will go with you."

A while after Battiste came through the yard, and went down to the meadow.

"Come, now," said Trina, running towards the wash-house, where she took out the spout from its hiding-place, and put it in position to fill a small tub; then she explained to Lili that they could push it aside when the tub was filled, and replace it if they wished: she must go back to her work. She departed, and now at last the voyage could begin. The end of the spout was taken out of the tub, and laid

on the floor; and then Lili and Wili got into the tub, drawing in Philomela and Schnurri after them. It was beautiful in the ark. There sat Noah and his wife, rejoicing in their preservation and the pleasant sail on the rising water; for a tiny brook kept flowing in from the spring. The water had already quite covered the floor, and now — truly — the ark was lifted and began to float! Noah and his wife shouted for joy. It was really a flood.

The wash-house was several steps lower than the ground; so there was space for considerable water. It rose higher and higher, and the children began to be a little uneasy.

"Look, look, Wili!" cried Lili. "We cannot get out, and it is getting still higher."

Wili looked thoughtfully over the edge of the tub, and said, —

"If it keeps on rising, we must drown."

And still it rose higher and higher.

Schnurri began to be restless, and sprang up, almost tipping the tub over. The water was so deep that the children could not jump out, and they both began to cry in terror, "We are drowning, we are drowning! Mamma, mamma! Battiste! Trina! We are drowning!" And they uttered the most terrible screams and cries. Schnurri barked and howled in sympathy; but Philomela bit and scratched and mewed furiously, for now the real character of the two showed itself. Philomela neither wished to get out into the water, nor to remain in the tub; and she behaved like a wild creature, snarling and biting and scratching.

But when Schnurri saw that his barking brought no aid, he gave a great leap into the water, swam to the door, shook himself, and ran away. The children screamed all the more, for this spring had nearly upset the tub.

Dora had run down to see what was the cause of these cries of terror. The wash-house was near the hedge; but she could see nothing except a clear stream of water flowing from the spring. She heard the shout for help, however, and hastened back to the house.

"Aunt, aunt!" she cried, breathless from fright. "Two children are drowning over there, do you hear? Do you hear?"

Her aunt had closed all the windows; but the cries pierced through.

"Horrors! what is the matter?" cried her aunt in fright. "I hear screams, in-

deed, but who talks of drowning? Mrs. Kurd! Mrs. Kurd! Mrs. Kurd!"

In the meantime the dripping Schnurri ran to the place where Battiste was cutting bean-poles.

Schnurri sprang upon him, biting his clothes, and barking continuously.

"Something has happened," said Battiste, taking one of the poles on his shoulder, and following the dog, who sprang towards the wash-house. Here he found the whole family already assembled, — the mother, Julius, Paula, Rolf, Hunne, and, last of all, Trina; for the noise had penetrated to every corner of the house and garden.

Battiste reached out his long pole to the tub.

"Take hold of it and cling to it firmly," he called to the children; and so drew the

ark and its occupants to dry land. Wili and Lili were white with fear, and were unable to speak. Their mother led them to a seat under the apple-tree to recover themselves; and Julius followed, saying reprovingly, "Oh, you terrible twins, you will be the death of us with your mischief!"

Battiste, in the meantime, had waded into the water, and opened all the places where it could escape.

To Trina, who was standing near, he said, —

"You have no more judgment than the seven-year-olds, — that is why this happened;" for he had discovered at once who had got the spout.

Trina did not answer this charge at the moment; but she secretly prepared to strike, like Philomela.

When all was quiet again, Philomela came up to Lili, purring and rubbing against her; but Lili pushed her away and stroked Schnurri, who was lying on the ground; and Wili whispered that they would give Schnurri all the supper, for now they had learned the true character of the two.

Hunne had been looking on attentively, and now went to Julius, who was walking up and down on the gravel walk.

"Julius," he said, earnestly, "tell me, how could the terrible twins be the death of us?"

"In many ways, Hunne. They have already tried fire and water; now perhaps they will tear the house down over our heads in a fit of excitement; then we shall lie underneath, and that will be the end of us."

"Couldn't we jump away quickly?" asked Hunne.

"Suppose the great thought should strike them in the middle of the night, Hunne?"

"Then wake me," begged the child.

Mrs. Kurd had responded to the loud calls of Aunt Ninette at the same moment that Battiste drew the ark to land; and the cries were suddenly stilled.

"Did you hear it, Mrs. Kurd? It was frightful; but now it is quiet. I wonder if they were rescued?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" said Mrs. Kurd, soothingly. "It was only the little ones who screamed a little; but that did not mean any danger."

"But such a cry from children! I am trembling in every limb. How has your uncle borne it? This is enough, Mrs.

Kurd; now we must move. This is the last."

With that Aunt Ninette went into her husband's room to see how he had taken the affair.

Mr. Titus did not hear his wife as she entered, for he had stuffed his ears full of cotton wool.

He had done this at the first outbreak of noise, and then continued his writing quietly.

"Dear me! that is fearfully unhealthy, and heats your head," complained his wife, when she discovered the cause of his indifference. She quickly pulled out the cotton, and then disclosed to him her plan of consulting with the pastor, on the next day after service, as to where they could go; for she had firmly decided not to remain here.

Mr. Titus agreed to every thing, and she went back to her room. Dora was standing in the passage waiting for her.

"Are we really going away, aunt?" she asked, anxiously.

"Most certainly," responded her aunt. "We leave this house on Monday."

The girl passed into her little room and sat down sorrowfully on the bed. It seemed hard to her that she must go away without once being in the beautiful garden with the children; and then she thought how she must go back to Carlsruhe and sew on her shirts, and never, never come back to see this merry life.

In her grief Dora's eyes were cast down, and she did not see that her five stars were beaming cheerfully upon her, as if calling, "Dora, Dora! Have you entirely forgotten your father's motto?"

CHAPTER VI.

A TERRIBLE DEED.

SUNDAY dawned sunny and beautiful.

All was quiet and lovely in the garden; there was no sound but the occasional dropping of an apple.

Mr. and Mrs. Birkenfeld had gone to church with Paula and Fräulein Hanenwinkel.

Julius and Hunne were in the sitting-room with a great dish of hazel-nuts, discussing the different ways in which the nut-cracker performed its task.

After the experience which Wili and Lili had had, they were contented with the ark with the wooden men and women,

and were now in the school-room, where they could cover the great table with their playthings.

Rolf had fled into the farthest corner of the garden, where there was a solitary summer-house, in order to be undisturbed in his reading.

After the flood, which had to take place this time without water, and when now the dove had returned with the olive branch, new plans began to form themselves in Lili's head.

"Wili, let us go down," she proposed. "Rolf put his bow in the entry last evening; let us go and look at it."

Wili was quite ready, and the two hastened down the stairs. Lili knew the very corner where the bow had been placed.

Yes, there it was; and near by lay the quiver and two feathered arrows.

"See, how nicely it goes," cried Lili. "You draw back this cord so, and lay the arrow so, and then you let go the string, and out goes the arrow quick as a wink. I have watched Rolf do it. Shall we try it, Wili?"

"We are not allowed to shoot with it. You know, Lili, papa said so," replied Wili.

"I don't mean to shoot, only to try it," explained Lili, — "only to see how it is done."

This pleased Wili.

"But where can we try that? There is no room here in the entry."

"No, no, I know where, — in the garden. Come," and Lili ran out with the quiver, Wili following with the bow to an open space near the hedge.

"Here," said Lili. "Come, now let us both see how it goes."

Wili came up with the bow. They placed the arrow, and drew the string, which sprang into its place. Lili shouted for joy at their success.

"Now you must raise the bow," she explained, "so, and the arrow comes there, Wili: do you see? And then you draw back on this thing, then you will see how nicely it goes. Just try it!"

Wili tried it. He pulled back; ah — the arrow whizzed through the hedge, and at the same moment a cry of pain sounded from the other side; then all was still.

The children looked at each other in alarm.

"Do you think it was a rabbit that moaned so?" asked Wili.

"Or do you suppose it could be a hen?" asked Lili, in response.

But they both had a very bad conscience, and a great fear in their hearts; for they knew that they had disobeyed in shooting with the bow, and both felt that the cry was that of a child, while each hoped that the other would think that it might be an animal. Without saying a word they carried the bow back to its place; but now a new anxiety was felt, — one arrow was lacking in the quiver. If Rolf discovered this loss!

They heard the people coming home from church; so they could not go and look for it, or their disobedience would be found out at once. Rolf did not know that they had done it, but if he should ask them!

They could see no way out of it: they had so involved themselves that they felt that they should not dare to speak the

truth when questions were asked about the arrow.

Weighed down by the sense of guilt, Wili and Lili crept back to the school-room, and sat there in silence and without stirring until they were called to dinner.

They stole into the room with no cheerful anticipation of the Sunday dinner, and seated themselves with down-cast eyes.

They choked over their soup as if there had been pebble-stones in it, which one could master only with the greatest effort. Neither of them looked up during the meal, and, when their father spoke to them, they hardly answered a word.

"What is the matter with them?" he asked, finally, for he knew very well that yesterday's performance was not the cause of these low spirits: the twins' penitence

never lasted as long as this. There was no answer.

The two children sat looking into their plates as if nailed to their seats. Their mother shook her head thoughtfully, and little Hunne kept a watchful eye on them, for he had noticed from the first that something was wrong.

The pudding was now brought on with the good sauce, and each one was helped to a generous slice.

Just then the father suddenly rose.

"What is that? Is there any very sick person in the next house? The doctor is coming at full speed, as if there were great danger."

"I do not know that any one is ill," replied his wife. "The widow has rented her rooms to some strangers; perhaps it is one of them."

The twins turned red and then white in their fright. A threatening voice within them said, "Now it is coming! Now it is coming!" They could not lift a finger in their terror. The beautiful pieces of pudding were untouched, although there were the most inviting raisins in them.

Hunne, too, the champion pudding-eater, left his piece untouched; and all at once he jumped down from his seat like a madman, crying, "Mamma! papa! Come, it is going to tumble down!" And he almost tore Julius from his seat, as he ran towards the door.

They heard him crying outside in the greatest excitement, —

"Come, come; it is tumbling down! Julius said so."

"A bad spirit must have got into the

children," said the father, in astonishment. "The twins look as if they were sitting on martyrs' benches, and Hunne behaves like a crazy creature."

Julius burst out into peals of laughter; for now it was clear to him that Hunne supposed that the quiet demeanor of the twins was due to the fact that they had secretly begun their work of destruction, and that the house would soon fall over the heads of the assembled family.

Julius explained this with repeated bursts of laughter.

But in vain did the mother try to call the youngster in with soothing words. He ran about by the door, crying that they must all come out quickly, until Mr. Birkenfeld gave orders to have the door closed, and the meal ended in quiet. Then they all went out to the garden,

where Hunne joined them. When he saw them all safe under the apple-tree, he said, sighing, "If only some one would bring out my pudding before it falls down!"

His mother tried to make him see how foolish both Julius and he had been: the former to tell such a thoughtless story, and he to believe it. She showed him how impossible it was that two such children could pull down a great stone house; but all thoughts of pulling down a house were soon entirely driven from Hunne's mind by other occurrences.

Dora had been standing at the hedge, waiting for the children to come into the garden, just as Wili and Lili appeared. With breathless interest she had watched the progress of their undertaking. The arrow flew straight against her bare arm.

She groaned in her pain; but she forgot pain in her fright, as the blood streamed over her arm and hand and dress. Her first thought was, "How fearfully aunt will fret!" and she sought for some means of concealing the accident. She bound her pocket-handkerchief as firmly as she could around the wound, and ran to the well before the house to wash off the traces of blood.

But it ran out under the bandage. She was already covered from head to foot with spots of blood.

Then she heard a call. "Dora, Dora!"

It was her aunt. It must come; Dora must answer.

Trembling she went up the stairs, holding out the wounded arm, from which blood was still dropping.

Her light Sunday gown was covered

with great spots, and there were streaks of blood on her face; for, in her eagerness to wash it off, Dora had spread it all over her.

"Mercy!" cried her aunt, as she saw her. "Dora, what is the matter with you? Speak! did you fall? How you look! You are as pale as death under the streaks of blood. Do speak, for heaven's sake!"

Dora had wished to speak several times, but could not make herself heard. Now she said, timidly,—

"It was an arrow."

Now came an outcry. The woman wrung her hands, running wildly about, and crying, "An arrow, an arrow! Shot! shot in the arm! You will be lame. Your arm will be stiff. You will be a cripple for your whole life. You can

never sew again, much less do any thing else. You will come to misery. We must all suffer for it. Every misfortune comes to us. How shall we live through it? What can we do when you are lame?"

"O aunt!" sobbed Dora. "Perhaps it will not be so bad. Papa always said,—

"'*God stays and rules among us,*
And guideth all things well.'"

"Yes, that is very true; but if you are lame, you are lame," complained Aunt Ninette: "that is a desperate certainty. But come, go — no, come here to the water. Where is Mrs. Kurd? Some one must go at once for the doctor."

Dora went to her wash-bowl, while her aunt ran for Mrs. Kurd, to impress on her the necessity of sending for a physician

at once, as no one could tell what the danger might be.

The doctor came as soon as he could. He examined the wound, stopped the blood, and bandaged the arm without saying a word, although Aunt Ninette made various attempts to get an explanation. He took his hat and was at the door.

"But, doctor, tell me," began Aunt Ninette, — "tell me, will the arm be lame? — always stiff?"

"Let us hope not. I will come again to-morrow;" and the doctor was gone.

"Let us hope not," repeated Aunt Ninette, in a doubtful tone. "That is the same with a doctor as saying, 'Yes, of course:' that I know very well. Ah, what will become of us? What shall we do? How shall we live through it?"

And she did not cease her fretting until late in the evening.

That night, as Wili's mother went into his room, she did not find him, as usual, sitting on his bed ready to say his prayers after a quiet talk with her. He sat there all bent over, and did not look up or speak as his mother came near him.

"Wili, what is the trouble?" she asked. "You have something on your mind. Have you done any thing wrong?"

Wili uttered an indistinct sound, which was not yes and not no.

"Come, repeat your evening hymn: perhaps it will lighten your heart," said his mother.

Wili began, —

"'The moon above is gleaming,
Light from the stars is streaming,
The heaven is clear and bright,'"

and so on; but his mind was not on it.

He listened for every sound outside, and looked fearfully at the door, as if something terrible might enter, and showed great anxiety in his uneasy glances.

So he came to the end of his hymn, —

> "'In mercy, Lord, now hear us;
> May we, and all those near us,
> Sleep peacefully this night.'"

Then all at once he broke out in loud weeping. He clung to his mother, and said, with sobs, —

"The child can never sleep again, and the good God will punish us fearfully."

"What do you mean by that?" said his mother, softly. "Come, tell me what has happened. I knew all day that you had done something. What is it?"

"We have — we have — shot a child, perhaps."

"Wili, what do you say?" cried his mother in alarm, who remembered suddenly how the doctor had hastened by the house. "But it is not possible! Tell me all that happened."

So Wili told what he and Lili had done, — how they had heard the cry, and had run away, and how they would rather die than live in such fear.

"Do you see, Wili, what comes from disobedience?" said his mother, seriously. "You thought it was nothing to play with the bow a little, but your father knew the great danger when he forbade you. We do not know what has come from your disobedience; but we will ask the good God to turn your naughty act into some good."

Wili had never prayed so earnestly as he did now, and it did him good to bring

all his fear and anxiety to Him who can pardon and help. Now he could look into his mother's eyes, and say good-night with a lighter heart.

Lili was waiting in another room for her mother, who said, as she went towards the bed, "Will you pray, Lili?" Lili began, then she stopped; then began again, only to pause again, and say,—

"Mamma, I cannot pray. God is angry with me."

"What have you done, Lili, that you know that God cannot be pleased with you?"

Lili was silent, and picked at the bed-clothes; for it was hard for her to give up.

"If God is not pleased with you, I am not; and now pleasant sleep, if you can have it;" and her mother rose to go.

"Mamma," cried Lili, "don't go. I will tell you all."

Mrs. Birkenfeld turned back.

"We shot with the bow, when we had been forbidden, and we hit something which moaned, and then we were very anxious and afraid, and could not be happy again," explained the child, sadly.

"Certainly you could not, and cannot now," said her mother. "Only think! because you did not obey, a poor child is lying over there in great pain, perhaps without her mother, for she is a visitor here. There she must lie in a strange house and suffer the night through."

"I will go over there and stay with her," said Lili, mournfully, beginning to cry. "I cannot sleep either, mamma."

"It must always be so when we have done wrong, Lili. I will go over to the child, and you must ask God to give you an obedient heart, and pray that your act

may not cause great suffering to an innocent person."

Trina was at once sent over to ascertain whether a child had really been hit, and how serious the hurt was.

Mrs. Kurd told her the whole story in detail, and what the doctor had said, namely, "Let us hope not," and that he would come again the next day.

Trina's report afforded some relief to Mrs. Birkenfeld. Her great anxiety had been lest the eye had been injured, or lest it might be a dangerous wound.

CHAPTER VII.

A WISH REALIZED.

THE next morning Mrs. Birkenfeld went over to the little house. She was warmly received; for Mrs. Kurd had not seen her since the strangers had arrived, and there was much to tell about them, and about yesterday's occurrence. As soon as there came a pause in Mrs. Kurd's tale, Mrs. Birkenfeld asked to speak with the strange lady, and to see the child who had been hurt.

Mrs. Ehrenreich soon appeared with her niece, who had her arm bandaged, and looked very pale and delicate.

Mrs. Birkenfeld expressed her deep sor-

row at the accident, and inquired most kindly how they all were. Aunt Ninette at once proceeded to speak of her husband's health, — of how necessary the fresh air was to him, and how they had come here to find perfect quiet; but that he had been obliged to sit with closed windows, because he could not bear a sound when he was writing; and so she feared that, instead of being cured, he would grow worse.

"I am extremely sorry if Mr. Ehrenreich is disturbed by the children's noise," said Mrs. Birkenfeld, who understood every thing at once. "If he does not go out, he ought to have an especially airy place for his work. I have just thought that down in our garden, away from the house and noise, is a pretty summer-house, with a table and arm-chairs. Mr. Ehren-

reich must have that for his study, and I will instruct the children never to go there or near to it."

This proposition pleased Aunt Ninette very much. She was very glad to tell her husband, and accepted the offer with thanks.

"And you, dear child," said Mrs. Birkenfeld, turning to Dora, "with your aunt's permission, must come over to our house to-day, and every day, to enjoy the garden. My children must make amends to you."

"With the children in the beautiful garden over there?" asked Dora, who could hardly believe it; and such a look of joy darted into her eyes that her aunt was astonished, for she had never seen it before. And it so touched Mrs. Birkenfeld's heart that the tears came into her eyes. She felt strangely drawn to the child, she could not tell why.

It was arranged that Dora should join them in the garden directly after dinner, and stay until evening.

Aunt Ninette immediately went to her husband's room, and told him about the secluded summer-house.

Uncle Titus was pleased with the idea; for he began to feel the need of air, and he could not decide to lose precious time by walking: he had never done that. The offer was most timely, and he proposed to inspect the summer-house at once.

They walked entirely around the garden on the outside in order not to meet any one. Through a little gate at the back they came to the lonely place which Mrs. Birkenfeld had described.

Two old nut-trees stood near the house, and a grape-vine with thick foliage; and

behind was the green meadow. It was perfectly still.

Uncle Titus had brought out a couple of great books, for he intended to remain if it pleased him. Aunt Ninette carried paper and ink, and Dora came behind with a wax-candle.

The place did please Mr. Titus. He seated himself at the table, drew in long breaths of the good air which came in through the windows and open door, and rubbed his hands in satisfaction. Then he began to write; and Aunt Ninette went back to the house with Dora, leaving him alone.

In the mean time the report of the twins' escapade had spread through the whole house. Rolf came home from his lessons and looked for his bow. One of the arrows was missing. Full of wrath,

he rushed into the house to find out who had taken it. This was not very difficult; for the twins were so penitent that they owned it at once, and also told Rolf of their fear on account of the groan they had heard, and that their mother had gone over to see who was hurt. Then they went to show him where the arrow would probably be; and, sure enough, there it was on the ground. Rolf's spirits were restored by the recovery, and he ran at once to Paula and Julius, crying, "Do you know, they have shot a child?"

And so it happened that all six, with Fräulein Hanenwinkel, were standing on the steps awaiting their mother's return with great anxiety. She had hardly come in sight when Hunne called, "Where did it go?"

And then a medley of voices shouted,

"Is it a child?" "Is it a boy?" "How large is the child?" "What is the name?"

"At least, come into the house," said their mother; and, when they were quiet, she told them about the pale, delicate girl, whose arm was bandaged so tightly that she could hardly move it; that she was about Paula's size, and probably of the same age; that she was very pleasant and well-bred; that her name was Dora; and that she was to come into their garden after dinner, when they could get acquainted with her. Every one was greatly interested, and began to speculate in regard to the appearance and manners of the child. Paula stood in quiet ecstasy, and said, —

"Oh, oh! If she is so good and so nice, and at the same time exactly my age, — oh, mamma, how glad I am!"

And secretly she thought of a great abiding friendship, and could hardly wait for the afternoon to come. Rolf thought that Dora would be of just the right age to guess his riddles, and he wished to make friends with her at once.

The twins had the feeling that Dora would belong entirely to them, because they had injured her; and they found it a fine idea to have a new playfellow, for a third was often necessary to the carrying out of their plans, and Paula could never be induced to join them. Hunne said, joyfully, "I am glad that Dora is coming; for I can go to her when there is nobody else, and when all the chairs are upside down." For Saturday morning always seemed in Hunne's eyes an uncomfortable time when he never knew what to do with himself. And Julius said, "Hunne, I wish

to have some share in Dora, too: what can I have?"

"Well, Jule," said Hunne, after some reflection, "she can help you pull off your riding-boots. There were not enough of us the last time."

"All right," replied Julius, contentedly.

All this time Dora was standing in the next house trembling with expectation. One moment she did not know what to do for joy that she was at last to go into the garden, where the flowers were so pretty, and the children so merry; and the next moment she was afraid. She had watched these children until she knew them. Each one had a special interest for her; but they did not know her, a stranger, and — this feeling oppressed her greatly — she was so ignorant and awkward, and they knew so much, and could do so many things, — that she had seen.

Would they not despise her, and not wish to have any thing more to do with her? These thoughts kept passing through Dora's mind as she tried to eat her dinner, until her aunt said, "You may go now, Dora."

Dora put on her hat and set out. She went through the front gate, into the house, and through the long entry to the door leading to the garden.

She stepped out and stood in sight of the whole family. Mr. Birkenfeld and his wife were sitting under the apple-tree, with all six children around them. Dora had not expected to see any one but the children, and stood looking timidly at the company, when little Hunne, who had long been waiting for her, jumped down from his seat, and said, "Come, Dora; there is room enough on my chair,—

come, come!" He took her hand, and tried to draw her along with him. The other children now ran to her, and greeted her as if she were an old friend of the family; and so, without noticing it, she was led up to their father and mother, who welcomed her so kindly that all her shyness disappeared, and she was soon sitting in the family circle as if she belonged there. The children pressed closer and closer to her, and each one had something especial to say to her. Paula spoke little; but she watched her constantly, as if making silent observations.

Wili and Lili stood as near to Dora's seat as they could, and Hunne kept a firm hold of her, that she might not escape from him.

"If you squeeze Dora to death this time, she cannot come again," said Julius,

who sat stretched out in his garden-chair. "Do give her room to breathe."

"How old are you, Dora? Not much older than I am, are you?" asked Lili, eagerly.

"I am just twelve years old," answered Dora.

"Oh, what a pity! Then you are as old as Paula," lamented Lili, who had hoped Dora would belong especially to her.

"No, no," interrupted Rolf; "Dora is nearer to me. If she is twelve, she is nearer my age than Paula's." Rolf considered this a very favorable circumstance for his plan. "Are you good at guessing riddles?"

"Yes, yes; I have made a riddle too," interposed Hunne. "Just guess, Dora: 'My first you can eat, but'"—

"Come, Hunne, don't bring in your horrible riddle, which is no riddle at all," broke in Rolf, indignantly. "But, listen, Dora: 'My first tastes'"—

But Rolf did not proceed far with his riddle. Lili caught Dora's hand and pulled her away, saying, impetuously, "Come, Dora, come! I will play every thing for you." For Dora had asked Lili if she played the piano.

"Don't be displeased, Rolf," said Dora, turning to him. "I could not guess your riddles, and it would be very tiresome for you."

"Won't you try it sometime?" asked Rolf, somewhat disappointed.

"Yes, if you wish, I will try afterwards," called Dora from the house, where Lili had dragged her by this time. Hunne was drawn along too, for he would not

leave Dora. "And mine, too, Dora; mine too!" he cried. And she promised to try his.

They had now reached the piano, and Wili joined them. The twins had been taking lessons from Fräulein Hanenwinkel for a year.

Their parents had a three-fold object in this. They thought it would be a source of pleasure to the children; the music might have a softening influence upon them; and, in any case, they could not do any mischief during their lessons and the necessary practice.

Lili was now reminded of the standpoint from which she herself viewed the thing.

"Do you know, Dora," she said, "that it is terribly tiresome to play the piano? If one must practise it is enough to kill one, isn't it, Wili?"

Wili assented.

"Oh, no, Lili! how can you talk so?" said Dora, looking at the piano longingly. "If I could only sit there and play as you can, it would be my greatest joy."

"Do you think so?" asked Lili, in astonishment, looking thoughtfully at Dora, whose longing look impressed her. She opened the piano quickly, and began to play her little song. Dora sat near drinking in the tones, and looking as if Lili were giving her the finest treat. Lili saw this, and was inspired to do her best.

Wili wished to see what effect he could produce, and said, "Lili, let me have a turn." But Lili was too much engaged, and only began again with new zeal.

"Do you know another tune?" asked Dora.

"No; Fräulein Hanenwinkel will not

give me one until I play the exercises right," answered Lili. "But wait till to-morrow. I know what I will do now, and I know something else. I will give you piano lessons so that you can play a song too, and then we will learn more; will you?"

"Oh, can you, Lili?" asked Dora; and she looked so overjoyed that Lili made a firm resolution to begin the next day.

"But my arm, Lili!" said Dora, discouraged.

But Lili was not to be disturbed in her plans.

"That will soon be better," she explained; "and until then I can learn a great deal, and that will be good for you."

The great supper-bell now sounded. Hunne caught Dora's hand quickly, and explained to her that there was no time to

lose, for papa always came very punctually to his meals, of which practice Hunne heartily approved. The table was laid under the apple-tree; and when Dora looked around and found herself in the midst of the flowers and friendly faces, it seemed to her that she must be dreaming; for it was so much better than she had pictured that she could not believe it real. She began to fear that she would awake and find all over. But the dream did not pass; and the real, tangible things on her plate convinced her that she was in the midst of life.

"Eat your cakes, Dora," said Hunne. "You will get behind us. See, Julius and I have already eaten four. But Julius and I can do any thing, except pull off the riding-boots. But you will help us, won't you?"

"Hunne, attend to your cakes," said Julius, warningly; and Dora had no time to answer, for Mr. Birkenfeld was asking her to tell him about her papa, and her life in Hamburg and Carlsruhe.

During all this time Paula had held herself aloof; but after supper she came to Dora's chair, and said, "Come with me for a little while." Dora followed joyfully, for she had felt drawn towards the reserved Paula. Arm in arm they disappeared in the garden; and when later the twins and Hunne and Rolf looked for Dora, she was not to be found. Paula had taken her to her own room. There they sat and talked of many things of which they had never before spoken to any one; for neither of them had had a friend of her own age before.

A real friendship was established be-

tween them; and they were so happy in each other that they forgot every thing else, and did not notice that the stars were out, and it was quite dark around them, until Paula's mother came into the room. She had at last thought where the girls were. Dora sprang up quickly when she noticed how late it was, and remembered that her aunt would be waiting for her. The other children were a little dissatisfied that Dora had escaped them so long, Rolf especially, who said, "You promised to try my riddle; will you now?"

But his mother said that Dora must come the next day, and they all demanded that she should come early and spend the day, and the next, and every day while she remained there; for there were so many things to do and speak of that they must use every moment. Rolf was to

walk home with her; and, as they went through the yard, the stars were so bright that Dora stood still, and pointed to the sky, saying, "See, Rolf! Do you see five gleaming stars there? I have known them so long! They always look into my room in Carlsruhe, and here they are again."

"Oh, I know them very well," said Rolf, at once. "They are on my map. Do you know what their names are?"

"Oh, no! Do you know the names of the stars too? You know so much!" said Dora, admiringly. "I suppose the five belong together, and have one name. There must be others which belong together. I have often thought so, when I have seen others. Do you know them all? Oh, if I could learn them from you!"

Rolf was delighted. "Come," he said,

with zeal, "let us begin at once, and I will tell you all of them, even if it takes until twelve o'clock."

This reminded Dora that it was already late.

"No, no, Rolf," she said, hastily; "thank you very much, but not to-night. To-morrow; will you, to-morrow?"

"Certainly. To-morrow, then; don't forget! Good-night."

"Good-night, Rolf," returned Dora, hastening into the house, so full of happiness that she sprang upon her aunt, and began to tell one thing after another with such astonishing vivacity that Aunt Ninette was alarmed, and said, —

"Dora, Dora! only think; this excitement may affect your arm. Go to bed now; that is best."

The girl obeyed; but she could not

sleep. Her heart was too full of joy and gratitude. She fell upon her knees and thanked God for this happiness which had come to her, feeling that she could go back to her long days of work, and live on the remembrance of this blessed time.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE RIDDLES.

EARLY the next morning, as Julius strode through the corridor with his riding-boots and spurs, he heard some one practising in the school-room. Fräulein Hanenwinkel never began her lessons so early, and he opened the door to see who was there.

Lili was sitting at the piano, and Wili stood near, eagerly waiting his turn.

"What is in the wind?" called Julius. "Is this the beginning of some terrible mischief?"

"Be quiet, Julius," returned Lili seriously. "We have no time to lose."

Julius laughed and went on. Downstairs he met Fräulein Hanenwinkel.

"What has happened to the twins?" he asked. "Are they really making an effort to be good?"

"Such an effort often succeeds better at seven years than at seventeen, Mr. Julius," was the short answer.

Julius laughed again as he passed on. His mother was just going out of the door, on her way to inquire of the physician whether any serious results were to be feared in Dora's case, as her aunt had apprehended.

"Do I hear the piano, Julius?" she asked. "That is something unusual at this time."

"I believe the end of the world is coming," replied Julius. "Lili is going from one finger exercise to another as if she

could not get enough of such enjoyment; and Wili is looking on hungrily, burning with desire to succeed her."

"It is remarkable," observed his mother. "Only yesterday the Fräulein was complaining to me that Lili had no interest in her playing, and could not be made to practise."

"Just as I said, mamma: something dreadful is going to happen."

"Perhaps something good," responded his mother, as she went down the hill.

She soon had an interview with the doctor, who assured her, to her great relief, that the arm was healing well, and that there would be no trouble after a few days.

On her way home she stopped to reassure Aunt Ninette, and to talk with her about the young girl. Then she heard

for the first time about Dora's sewing, and that there were important reasons why she should learn to work properly.

Mrs. Birkenfeld felt a real sympathy for the child. She begged to have her released from work during her visit, and offered to have the shirts made by her seamstress, while Dora enjoyed the fresh air with her children. Mrs. Birkenfeld's quiet ways made a great impression on Aunt Ninette, and she could not refuse her any thing. She forgot to complain, and the whole aspect of things seemed changed somehow; nothing looked as dark as before. With deep gratitude she spoke of how comfortable her husband was in the summer-house, where he remained until late into the night, and then could hardly leave it. She had even forgotten the noise so far that she gladly

accepted an invitation to go often into the garden herself.

Dora had hardly opened her eyes that morning when she sprang out of bed, full of joyful anticipations of the day. But her aunt would not allow her to go too early: it was never her way to take people by storm. Not until Mrs. Birkenfeld asked for her was she called, and permitted to go. This time she did not stop and look timidly about her. She sprang into the corridor, and was instantly welcomed by many voices. Wili and Lili, Hunne and Paula, all came to lead her into the sitting-room. Julius had returned from his ride, and was sitting with feet stretched out, as if inviting some one to assist him in getting off his boots. Dora ran to him, and asked if she might do it. "No, no, Dora," he said, drawing his feet

back. "What are you thinking of?" And, rising, he offered her his seat very politely. But the twins were pulling her, and crying, "Come with us! come with us!" And Hunne caught hold of her from behind, crying loudly, "Come with me! come with me!" while Paula whispered to her, "Go with the twins first, or they will never be still. Afterwards I will find you, and we will stay together."

"Dora," said Julius, "your only hope of a quiet existence in this house is to stay with me. If you go with Paula, you will become very romantic and airy, and lose your appetite. If you stay with Rolf, you will become a great, unending riddle."

"She would be that in any case," remarked Fräulein Hanenwinkel, who was passing through the room.

"If you turn to Fräulein Hanenwinkel,"

continued Julius, quickly, in order that the latter might have the satisfaction of hearing it, "you will get salt instead of preserves. If you attach yourself to the twins, you will be torn in pieces; and Hunne will make you deaf."

In spite of this threatened danger, Dora allowed herself to be led away by the impetuous twins; and Hunne ran after.

Lili rushed to the piano and played and played. When she had finished her piece once, and saw Dora's approving look, she began again. All at once Dora began to sing; and Wili, who was waiting his turn at the piano, joined her, and Hunne, too, so that a glad chorus was heard:—

"Be joyful in your life
While yet the lamp glows;
And, ere it withers,
Gather the rose."

Their voices rose higher and higher in their zeal, and Hunne shouted enough to deafen one. Suddenly Lili turned around on the stool. "But to-morrow, — wait until to-morrow; then you will learn something, Dora," she cried, her face glowing with anticipation; for she had practised so well that she felt that she could with right demand half a dozen new songs from Fräulein Hanenwinkel. The bell now summoned the twins to their lessons, a sound which rejoiced Hunne, for he could have Dora all to himself until dinner-time. He found her so friendly and so sympathetic, that he resolved never to let her leave him; but he was disappointed, for Paula, who had finished her French exercises, took Dora away with her soon after dinner.

Dora wished for nothing better; for

these two understood each other so well that they would gladly have talked all day, and all night too, of all their plans and hopes and fears. They both felt that they could never be together long enough, and forgot time altogether.

Not until seven o'clock, when the whole family was assembled for supper under the apple-tree, did they return to the others.

During the meal Rolf cast meaning looks at Dora from time to time, which seemed to say, "Don't forget that we have something to do."

He watched the heavens carefully; and when the first star began to gleam through the boughs of the apple-tree, he rushed to Dora, and said, "Now, Dora, see! just look above you!"

Thereupon he drew her off into the

farthest corner of the garden, in order to be undisturbed. He planted himself on a suitable spot, and began his instruction.

"See, Dora, there are your five; one and two, and then two. Do you see them?"

"Oh, yes; I know them well, so well!" replied Dora.

"Well, this cluster of stars is called Cassiopeia. Now we will look farther. But wait a minute, I have just thought of a riddle which belongs here. You can guess it easily, — will you?"

"I will if I can, but I fear your riddles are too difficult for me."

"No, no; just listen. I will say it slowly.

"'My first, I'm sure, if you'll but test,
Of all drinks you'll pronounce the best;

Now add the simple letter *y*,
And you've a word to qualify;
My last you often need to know
When to strange towns you wish to go;
My whole you only see at night;
Look up, and it will meet your sight.'"

"O Rolf! I can never guess it. I am very stupid, I am sorry to say. It must be very tiresome for you to be with me," said Dora, sadly.

"No, indeed. It is only because you are not accustomed to them," replied Rolf, kindly. "Try again, and you will get it. I will give you an easier one:—

"'My first is worn, and made of yarn;
My second lives in every barn;
My third is what all men desire,
And very few will e'er acquire;
My whole's a famous Greek of old,
Whose name you often have been told.'"

"I can't guess that one at all," said Dora. "Don't waste so much trouble on me. I don't know any thing about Greece."

"Well, perhaps you know about some other country;" and, before Dora could protest, Rolf had begun to recite, in a loud voice,—

"'My first you feel whene'er you stand
In sight of something great and grand;
And when my second strikes your path,
You wish the strength of him of Gath;
My third includes both you and me,
Of plural number you'll agree;
My whole once sat upon a throne,
And was the emperor of'"—

"Of Rome," came in a deep bass voice from the dark background.

The children started in fright, but Dora laughed the next minute.

"It is Uncle Titus in the summer-house. Let us go in to see him."

Rolf was very willing. They found Uncle Titus leaning against the wall, and looking much pleased when he saw them.

Rolf returned his friendly greeting, and inquired at once if he had guessed the riddle.

"It is the Emperor Augustus, is it not, my son?" said Uncle Titus, tapping Rolf on the shoulder.

"Yes, that is it," replied Rolf, in delight. "Have you guessed the others too?"

"Perhaps," responded Mr. Titus. "Should I be wrong if I said that the first was the *Milky Way*, and the second *Socrates?*"

"Oh, oh, every one right!" cried Rolf, highly pleased. "It is splendid to make

riddles so. I have some others; might I give you one of them, Mr. Ehrenreich?"

"Yes, my son, why not?" answered Mr. Titus, kindly. "Out with them; we will try them."

Rolf was filled with wonder. "I will give the shortest and the easiest first," he explained:—

"'My first and second together bind,
You'll have what surely is not mind;
My last the Alpine shepherds blow;
My whole is ever white with snow.'

"Do you know what it is?"

"Possibly, my son, possibly: go on."

"This is a long one," said Rolf, as he began:—

"'Upon my first large ships will float;
Upon my second scarce a boat;
My third denotes astonishment;
My fourth a prefix used with spent;

My whole a queen of ancient time,
Who revelled in a sunny clime.'"

"So, my son, now let us guess them," said Uncle Titus, with a satisfied smile. "Number one, *Matterhorn;* number two, *Semiramis.*"

"Right! That is splendid! I have always wished to have my riddles so treated," said Rolf, with satisfaction. "Until now I have had to keep all the unguessed riddles: now they are all solved, and I can begin new ones."

"I will make you a proposition," said Uncle Titus, as he prepared to go home. "Come here to me every evening, and bring me the result of your thinking. Who knows but I may give you something to guess too?"

It was now too late to study the stars; but Rolf and Dora ran back to the house

in great glee at the result of their meeting, while Mr. Titus went to his lodging in a state of quiet satisfaction. He had always wished for a son about twelve years old, who was past the noisy period, and with whom he could converse rationally about various things. He found all this in Rolf, and the boy's unconcealed joy in his companionship awoke a real fatherly love in his heart. He felt so strangely cheerful as he walked home in the starlight, that all at once he began to sing, —

"'Be joyful in your life,
While yet the lamp glows;'"

for the melody had haunted him ever since he heard it in the morning.

Aunt Ninette was looking out of the window, and said, in astonishment, "Can that be Mr. Titus?"

CHAPTER IX.

A MISSING LINK SUPPLIED.

In the Birkenfeld house, as well as in the cottage, there was not a person at this time who did not say, now and then, "Another week gone so soon!" or, "Another Sunday morning here!"

But the days were especially short to Dora. They did not seem to have half as many hours as they did in Carlsruhe; and every night, when she went to bed, she regretted that she must spend so much of the precious time in sleep. She would have been glad to sit at the piano and practise while the others were asleep;

for her arm was long since healed, and the musical instruction had begun.

Lili was a very zealous teacher. She required no finger exercises, and no scales, but she gave her the song at once; and Dora could already play "Be joyful in your life" with her right hand.

The teacher herself made such progress that Fräulein Hanenwinkel was astonished. Her mother, too, noticed the change, and often stopped to listen to her with great satisfaction; for the child had much musical talent, and had improved wonderfully.

Paula passed her days in blissful content. She had what she had long desired, a friend,—and such a friend! She found the real friendship much more beautiful than her fancy, for she had never imagined such a being as Dora. So Paula,

too, was sorry every night to waste so much of the beautiful time in sleep.

Rolf spent most of his time in composing riddles. He was usually seen walking up and down in the garden, so buried in thought that Hunne was warned to keep out of his way, lest he should be walked over and thrown down. Mr. Ehrenreich waited for him every evening in the summer-house, and discovered the most unknown names with such facility that Rolf was spurred on to fresh exertions.

He was also led on to new fields of study, for Mr. Titus began to make riddles for him in Latin. These were always in writing, and were given to papa and Julius to work upon, but with no success. The former declared that he had forgotten his Latin, and Julius said he was not willing to make such useless exertions

in vacation: he needed all his strength for serious study. But Rolf delved and searched in his Latin lexicon, and thought and thought until he had dug out the meaning, which he brought in triumph to his father and Julius, and in the evening to Mr. Titus, who showed such joy in the right answer that the boy was incited to new efforts. He was so eager to understand and to guess better that he rose early in the morning, and went into the garden with his lexicon, and studied as if he could not get enough of it.

Little Hunne passed the happiest days; for no matter how many demands he made upon Dora's time, she never repulsed him, and never ran away from him.

Mrs. Birkenfeld had persuaded Aunt Ninette to allow Dora to be free mornings and evenings, and only to work on her

shirts in the afternoon, when the whole family was together in the garden.

In this way Dora discovered that sewing on shirts could be one of the most agreeable occupations; that it depends entirely upon the circumstances under which it is done.

Thus there were many hours in the day when Hunne had his new friend to himself, and she had made him a new riddle, so that he was not always obliged to give the nut-cracker. To his unbounded delight, the new riddle achieved a great triumph.

Nobody in the house could solve it, and so he was able to give it again and again, and no one had a chance to say, "You always bring me the same;" for nobody had found the answer. This was the riddle:—

"My first brings tears to every eye;
My next, too warm, will make you cry;
'No' to my last you oft reply."

Everybody had tried it, and in vain.

"It must be a music-lesson," said Fräulein Hanenwinkel. "Music makes everybody weep, — many cry during the lesson, and many decline lessons."

"Not right, not right!" shouted Hunne.

"It is school-room," asserted Rolf.

"Ho, Rolf! Not right, not right!" said Hunne, exultantly.

"The answer might be childhood," said his mother. "Every child cries, — some about their hoods, and in childhood one constantly hears 'no.'"

"Mamma is wrong too! Mamma is wrong," shouted the child, jumping for joy.

"It must be leave-taking," declared his

father. "We all say no to Dora's taking leave of us."

"Not right, papa; not right," cried Hunne, in delight.

Rolf was greatly distressed that such a simple riddle could not be guessed, and the fortunate possessor of the secret continued to run from one to the other, crying, "Guess, guess!"

So the days passed.

"My dear Ninette," said Uncle Titus one morning at breakfast, "the last week of our stay has come. Suppose we postpone it for fourteen days. I feel uncommonly well here. My dizziness has disappeared altogether, and I have new strength in my limbs."

"One can see that, my dear Titus," returned Aunt Ninette, with satisfaction. "You look ten years younger than when we came here."

"And I think that the new mode of life agrees with you. I don't seem to hear you complaining any more, dear Ninette."

"Yes, every thing is so different," remarked his wife; "and the children's noise does not seem the same when one knows the children. I must say that I am glad we did not move. I miss the voices when I do not hear them, and feel lost when there is no noise and shouting in the garden."

"It is just so with me," said Uncle Titus; "and I really rejoice in the evening to have the boy burst upon me, eager to tell what he has accomplished, and drinking in every one of my words with his eyes. It is a real joy to have such a boy."

"My dear Titus, you come home quite

animated, and are younger than I have ever known you. We will stay here as long as we can. Even our doctor could not have foreseen such results from our stay in the country; it is wonderful."

Dora ran over to Paula with this news in great delight.

The thought of their near departure had been a terrible one to her. How could she live away from those so dear to her? It seemed to her as if her heart must break when the separation came.

When the news of Dora's lengthened stay spread through the house there was great rejoicing, and she was almost hugged to death; for each of the children wished to show his joy in that way.

That night, after the children were in bed, Mr. and Mrs. Birkenfeld sat together talking over various matters, and among

others the prolonged stay of their neighbors. Mrs. Birkenfeld expressed her satisfaction at this, and ended with the words, "But the day must soon come when we shall lose the child. I dread to think of it. I cannot tell what a blessing this Dora has been in our house; but it is everywhere seen. Every day I discover some new trace of her good influence. I do not understand why I am so drawn to the child, nor why, when I look into her eyes, they seem familiar to me, and awaken a world of recollections."

"Ah, my dear wife, you always think that when you love any one," interposed Mr. Birkenfeld. "I remember well that, after you had known me for a time, it seemed to you that we had stood in some mysterious relation to each other before."

"Be that as it may," returned Mrs. Birk-

enfeld, "you will not deny what can be seen and learned through your senses, and that is enough to make us prize Dora highly. So many things have changed since she came into our house. Paula is like a sunbeam: no trace of her accustomed melancholy; Julius pulls off his own riding-boots without disturbing the whole house; Rolf is so zealous for study that he does not waste one moment of the day; Lili has developed a degree of diligence and skill in her practice which no one would ever have suspected; and little Hunne is so busy and so happy that it does one good to look at him."

"And we have to thank Dora that the twins have not disturbed the house by some terrible mischief for so long a time," observed Mr. Birkenfeld.

"Without doubt," said his wife, "in

some way Dora has aroused a great enthusiasm for the piano in Lili, who devotes all her energy and thought to that. Wili works with her, and so it does not enter into their minds to plan any adventures."

"A wonderful creature, this Dora! What a pity that she is going away!" said Mr. Birkenfeld, regretfully.

"That troubles me," said his wife; "and I think of every way in which I could manage to prolong her stay."

"No, no," interrupted her husband; "that will not do. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the family. They must go. Perhaps we can arrange something for another year, when they come again."

Mrs. Birkenfeld sighed. She thought of the long winter and the uncertainty of their ever seeing them again.

The days went on, and the last week had come. Monday was the day fixed for the departure. A great festival had been planned in honor of the occasion, although no one felt in a very festive mood. Rolf was very active in the preparations.

A line of colored lanterns with riddles as transparencies was to encircle the summer-house in honor of his patron.

On Saturday Dora came to dinner as usual. There seemed to be a general loss of appetite; for, as the mother dipped out the soup, from all sides was heard, "A little." "A very little, please." "I would rather not have any to-day." "Not so much for me."

"I should like to know," remarked their father, "whether this general 'no' is to be attributed to grief at the approaching separation, or to the nature of the onion-soup."

"Onion-soup, onion-soup; that is the answer!" cried Rolf, in a tone of triumph; for he could hardly bear the reproach of an unguessed riddle given by Hunne.

It was right. Hunne was much cast down, and said, reproachfully, "Yes, yes, papa; if you had not said '*no*' to the onion-soup, nobody would ever have guessed my riddle. Now it is all out."

But Dora, who sat next to the little fellow, was always ready to comfort him. "No, no, Hunne," she whispered to him, "it is not all out. This afternoon I will guide your hand, and you shall write your riddle in my album, and I will give it to many people in Carlsruhe who know nothing of it."

That was comforting, and Hunne could end his meal in peace. But there was a great commotion under the apple-tree

afterwards. It was the last day for a long, long time, perhaps forever, that Dora would sit here with them, as she must assist her aunt in the preparations for the journey on the next day.

Paula sat with great tears in her eyes and said nothing. Lili had already shown her great displeasure by various noisy movements. All at once she spoke.

"Mamma, I never wish to play the piano again when Dora is not here. It will be fearfully stupid, and Fräulein Hanenwinkel will say again that I do nothing, and I don't care."

"Ah, ah," sighed Julius. "We are going to have dangerous times if life grows stupid for the twins again. It is an entirely unnecessary journey," he continued, with real eagerness. "It would do Dora good to remain here until winter. Her

uncle and aunt could go back to their peaceful home in Carlsruhe without her."

His mother said that she would ask for a visit the next year, and they must all reconcile themselves to the separation for the present.

Hunne, who cared more for the present than for the future, kept pulling Dora's apron, and saying, "Get the book, get the book."

According to a good old custom, Dora had brought over her album, that each of her new friends might write something in it.

It was not a new, elegant album, but an old book with yellowed leaves, on many of which the writing was much faded with age. There were a few bunches of faded flowers fastened here and there in the book which had belonged to Dora's

mother when she was a child, and all the verses were written in a childish hand. There were some drawings too. A little house and a little man near it, standing by a well, attracted Hunne's attention.

He took the book and began to turn over the leaves.

"Aha!" he said, with a knowing air, as he drew out a little sheet of paper. "Mamma has that too. It belongs to Lili, whom I must find in America."

Julius laughed.

"What are you raving about to Dora, Hunne?"

Mrs. Birkenfeld cast a hasty glance in that direction, then took the little sheet and read it. Tears came to her eyes. Memories of days long past, and of that child's face so dear to her, rose before her and overpowered her. She was reminded

of her mother long since dead, of her happy childhood, of all the vanished days.

This little sheet was the half of hers which had belonged to her dear friend Lili. She put it into her husband's hand and drew the other half out of her note-book, where she kept it since its recovery. The children looked on eagerly as their father laid the two yellow strips together and made a sheet of paper of the usual size. The two strips were written by the same child's hand; and, when they were put together, they had some meaning.

Mr. Birkenfeld read them aloud, —

"'My hand in yours I lay,
And there I let it stay,
Never to take away.
But stern fate says not so;
Life's streams divided flow,
And we apart must go.

This sheet we cut in twain,
And may it so remain,
Until we meet again;
And, if it e'er betide
We place them side by side,
There let them aye abide.'"

Mrs. Birkenfeld took Dora's hand.

"Where did you get this?" she asked.

"It is my mother's album. The paper was always in it," said Dora, in astonishment.

"You are my Lili's child!" cried the mother. "Now I know why the sight of you awakened memories of the past." And with deep emotion she folded Dora in her arms.

The children were greatly excited over this occurrence; but, when they saw how their mother was moved, they sat silent, looking on with great interest. Little Hunne, however, broke the silence.

"Must I go to America now, mamma?" he asked, evidently pleased with the prospect of being able to stay at home; for he had been a little uneasy over the idea of going to America alone.

"No, no; we will all stay here," said his mother. "Dora is the Lili whom you were to find."

"O mamma!" cried Paula, with unusual animation, "let Dora and me carry on what you have begun with Lili; then we can say,—

> "'And, if it e'er betide
> We place them side by side,
> There let them aye abide.'"

"Oh, yes; and we," "And I," "And I too," called the twins, and Rolf, and Hunne, and Julius in his bass voice, all at once. But their father and mother had

disappeared under the trees, where they were talking together.

"I am quite willing, quite willing," the former repeated several times, as something was eagerly proposed to him.

They separated, and Mrs. Birkenfeld went over to the cottage.

She inquired for Aunt Ninette, and told her with great warmth of the pleasant discovery that she had made, — that Dora was the child of her first dear friend, whom she had mourned for many years and never forgotten. She knew now that this friend was dead; but she wished to know something more about her life, and also more of Dora's circumstances. Aunt Ninette was not able to give her much information: she had never known her. Her brother had found his wife in America, and returned with her to Ham-

burg, where she died when Dora was an infant.

Then Mrs. Birkenfeld went straight to the point. She told Aunt Ninette what pleasures she had enjoyed in the house of her friend, and how much she owed to this family, who had exerted a direct influence upon her whole life; and she wished to show her gratitude by doing something for Dora.

She would like to take her as her own child, if her uncle and aunt would consent.

No objection was made. Aunt Ninette said quite frankly that Dora had no inheritance, and must soon begin to earn her own bread by her needle, as they were not able to give her any further advantages. So they considered it great good fortune that the child had found such friends, and rejoiced in it.

Mrs. Birkenfeld pressed Aunt Ninette's hand warmly, and hastened home to tell the good news to the children.

She found them all waiting eagerly for her return. They had noticed that she had some plan to carry out, and, supposing it to be in regard to making Dora's stay longer, they were impatient to hear the decision.

When they were told that from this time Dora would belong to them, and would be their sister, they raised a shout of joy which reached to the farthest corner of the garden.

Uncle Titus came to the door of the summer-house and listened with a benevolent smile, saying, half aloud, "It is a pity that it must end."

At the same time Aunt Ninette was standing by the open window, looking

down into the garden, and listening to the continued expressions of joy. "We shall miss it when we do not hear it any more," she murmured.

Such a spirit of festivity reigned among the children that they vied with each other in proposing a grander celebration than the garden had ever seen before.

That night, for the last time, Dora entered her little room. The happy children, whom she had watched with such desire, were to be her brothers and sisters. The beautiful garden was to be hers. She was to have a father and mother to surround her with loving care, and she was to study with the other children, and have music-lessons, as Lili had already announced to her.

These thoughts so filled her heart that she could hardly contain herself. Her

father must certainly look down upon her and rejoice with her. She stood at her window and looked up to the starry heavens. Her five stars were there, and reminded her of the time when they had seen her as sad and faint-hearted as if she knew nothing of a Father in heaven who does all things for the best. And Dora resolved then never to forget her father's motto, whatever might happen to her, —

"God stays and rules among us,
And guideth all things well."

Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette engaged lodgings of Mrs. Kurd for the next summer. Mr. Titus went even further: he requested her never to promise her rooms to any one else, for he had been so pleased that he wished to be certain of the place for all time.

On Monday morning the whole Birkenfeld family gathered about the travelling-carriage, and hearty farewells were said. Rolf drew Uncle Titus aside, and asked timidly if he might now and then send a riddle to Carlsruhe.

Mr. Titus assured him that it would give him great pleasure, and he would send the solution in good time.

Sly Hunne, who overheard this conversation, said at once, "I will send mine too;" for he did not doubt that it would increase the joy of Mr. Titus, and he was sure that the people of Carlsruhe would never guess it, which was a great satisfaction.

Dora and Paula returned to the garden arm in arm, and sang merrily, —

"We place them side by side,
There let them aye abide."

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"Good night!" said the hen, when her supper was done,
To Fanny who stood in the door,
"Good night," answered she, "come back in the morn,
And you and your chicks shall have more."

MAY 20TH.

There's a merry brown thrush sitting up in the tree,
"He's singing to me! He's singing to me!"
And what does he say, little girl, little boy?
"Oh, the world's running over with joy."

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